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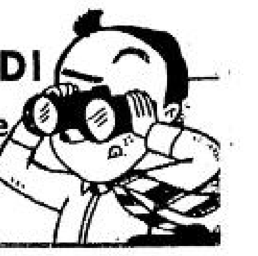

Media terror gag may lead to abuses, professor warns

By Leila B. Salaverria and Luige A. del Puerto

THE CALL by a top military officer for a ban on media interviews with "known terrorists" may lead to abuses, including the unwarranted branding of people as exponents of violence.

Dr. Mary Racelis, a sociology professor at Ate-

MEDIA/ A4

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, March 9, 2005 ★★ 80 pages / 9 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 91 P18

Filipinos among world's earliest risers, says survey

SINGAPORE—Indonesians, Vietnamese and Filipinos are among the earliest risers in the world while many Taiwanese, South Koreans and Hong Kongers are night owls, according to a global sur-

FILIPINOS/ A21

HINDI LANG PANG-SIMBANG GABI!

website: www.inq7.net

RP No. 2 on Asia graft list

UN body endorses antiterror law for RP

By Volt Contreras, Norman Bordadora and Leila B. Salaverria

A DELEGATION from the United Nations has backed the immediate passage of an antiterror law in the country, and said Congress should put enough teeth in the measure to allow the arrest of not only bombers, assassins or saboteurs but also their financiers, recruiters and suppliers.

Hosted by the Department of Foreign Affairs, the team from the Austria-based UN Office on Drugs and Crime conducted a workshop on March 1 to help Philippine officials craft an antiterror law that would be "in harmony" with UN Security Council resolutions and other international conventions on terrorism.

The workshop participants formulated recommendations that, among other things, urged lawmakers to make the law applicable to persons engaged in

UN BODY/ A4

LORD, HELP US
President Macapagal-Arroyo looks imploringly toward heaven before answering a question during Tuesday's press conference at the Marco Polo Hotel in Davao City.
EDWIN BACASMAS

Survey covers 900 foreigners in region

FOREIGN businessmen have ranked the Philippines the second most corrupt country in Asia, according to results of a survey conducted by a Hong Kong-based consultancy group.

Indonesia is ranked the most corrupt country in the region, raising fears about how billions of dollars in post-tsunami aid will end up, the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy Ltd. (PERC) said yesterday.

PERC, which provides advice to companies and governments on how to do business in Asia, polled more than 900 expatriate respondents across the region in January and February.

Across Asia, perceptions of corruption were little better than a decade ago even though governments had lost power in part because of their reputation for nepotism and cronyism and had been replaced by administrations promising cleaner governance.

"Many of the same old problems continue," PERC said in the report. "Only the actors have changed."

In the Philippines, a regular bottom-dweller in the survey, "corruption is clearly less today" than it was in the worst days of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, who was overthrown by a popular revolt in 1986, PERC said.

But it was more difficult to say whether the current administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo "is any cleaner or dirtier,"

RP NO. 2/ A8

Gov't may allow logging in Cordillera, says GMA

THE GOVERNMENT is likely to allow logging operations in the Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR), President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday.

"We may need one area in Luzon and Cordillera looks like the most logical," the President said when asked whether logging operations would be allowed to resume in CAR.

The other day, Environment Secretary Michael Defensor said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources was studying whether logging in the CAR would be allowed following the lifting of the log ban in Region 11 (Davao) and Caraga in Mindanao.

In Baguio City, Cordillera forest stakeholders were divided over reports that the government may lift the log ban in the CAR, which covers Abra, Apayao, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga and Mountain Province.

Supporters of slain rebel priest Conrado Balweg have been campaigning against a logging firm operating in Apayao but have been rebuffed by government officials.

Santos Bayucca, project director of the Ifugao Global Forest City Movement, said some environmental activists were against a total log ban because it encouraged violators at the expense of indigenous peoples who relied on forest products to survive.

He said the group was campaigning to reforest Ifugao "as long as our indigenous woodcarvers are allowed to use our trees the way we know how."

Removing restrictions would embolden illegal loggers and licensed loggers, who violate their franchises, according to Miguel Sugguiyao, chief of a faction of the Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA).

The CPLA faction has been lobbying for an investigation of logging concessions in Apayao.

More than 80 percent of the Cordilleras are classified as forest land, although the latest report of the Cordillera Regional Development Council notes that old forest growth in the region had been reduced to one percent of the forest cover.

In the Senate, Sen. Jamby Madrigal yesterday urged the

GOV'T/ A21

Women hold global march for equal rights

PARIS—Women's groups yesterday embarked on a global march for equal rights on the occasion of International Women's Day amid fresh reports that painted a grim picture of their plight in many parts of the world.

The world tour for a charter for equal rights got under way in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and will come to an end in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in October after passing through over 50 countries in between.

The Women's Global Charter for Humanity was adopted last December by women's rights groups in Kigali, the Rwandan capital.

Organizers expect 30,000 women to attend Tuesday's start of the tour. Ouagadougou, the Burkina Faso capital, was chosen as the final destination because of its poverty and low level of protection for women.

The charter proposes "to build another world where exploitation, oppression, intolerance and exclu-

WOMEN/ A22

JOAN BONDOC

SUMMER BEAUTIES. Five of 23 contestants in the Binibining Pilipinas 2005 tilt smile, twirl and wave during their Tuesday presentation to the media at the Araneta Coliseum. Three winners will represent the country in the Miss Universe, Miss World and Miss International pageants.

job discrimination, GAD contractualization, VAT increase, Globalization,
Kalayaan, Karapatan para sa

MILITANT women and policemen face off near Malacañang in a protest rally marking International Women's Day. The marchers support a House measure on reproductive health that the Church opposes.
REM ZAMORA

Ignore Church, militant women ask lawmakers

PROGRESSIVE women's groups yesterday said the observance of International Women's Day should be the platform from which to defend the reproductive health bill and the Department of Health's "Ligtas Buntis" program against attacks by the Catholic Church.

Marching from the Sandiganbayan building to the House of Representatives in Quezon City, members of Pilakk, Makalaya and Likhaan called on lawmakers to ignore the stand of the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines against the proposed Responsible Parenthood and Population Management Act (House Bill No. 3773).

Dr. Junice Melgar, executive director of Likhaan, said the bottom line of the bishops' opposition was that "they would rather that women die from unplanned pregnancies."

"Women's lives are put at risk because of the many complications that can arise during their pregnancy and delivery. It is poor women who face much greater risk and the ones who are dying. The sad thing is that all these deaths can be prevented," Melgar said.

Likhaan is a center for women's health resources; Pilakk and Makalaya are federations of urban poor women and youth.

Members of the party-list group Gabriela and Woman Rage! and workers belonging to the Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino-Kababaihan also massed in protest in front of the House, pushing for the passage of HB 3773.

Elsewhere, other women's groups took to the streets to rail at the government for suppressing their reproductive and other rights.

At the House, Alagad Rep. Rodante Marcoleta said clergymen opposed to HB 3773 had actually failed to read the measure.

"Can't they read? They were the ones who said we're legalizing abortion, which is not found in the bill," said the party-list representative. "If they claim to be pro-life, why are they barring priests from marrying?"

Marcoleta said he and Representatives Janet Garin and Darlene Antonino-Custodio would

IGNORE/ A21

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao including Palawan will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms. SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/03/09/05

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Second FRONTPAGE

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Senate, House agree to end bickering

By Michael Lim Ubac
and Juliet Labog-Javellana

AFTER days of trading barbs, feuding members of the Senate and the House of Representatives led by Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan and former Speaker Arnulfo Fuentebella agreed Monday night to end the hostilities that virtually placed both chambers at a standstill.

At a meeting held over dinner at Shangri-La Hotel in Makati City, House members agreed to kiss and make up with their counterparts in the Senate. But the issue that started it all—the reduced pork barrel allocations in the 2005 national budget—was not discussed.

"We recognize that there were no winners in this word war, and the sooner we ended it, and worked toward constructive dialogue, the better for both chambers and the country," said Pangilinan in a phone interview Monday night.

Pangilinan said pork was not served during dinner, but "mostly fish," in an apparent reference to the controversial pork barrel funds, a known source of kickbacks for lawmakers. "It was a Japanese restaurant, so (we) ate fish. But nothing fishy," he added.

Pangilinan was dispatched by Senate President Franklin Drilon to meet with the congressmen since Sen. Manuel Villar, chair of the Senate finance committee, who was in Pangasinan, could not make it.

Fuentebella, the House deputy majority leader, was with Deputy Speaker Raul del Mar and Representatives Teodoro Locsin, Ronaldo Zamora, Antonino Roman, Jose Solis, Salacnib Baterina, Prospero Pichay and Arthur Defensor.

Pangilinan said the pork barrel was not discussed at all, although he hinted that the message was clear: the House was hurting from the sudden decision of the Senate to approve the P907.6-billion national budget in toto.

But he refused to say if the lawmakers issued a veiled warning against the Senate not to get in the way next time.

"We agreed to maintain an open and healthy communication line," said Pangilinan, noting that Zamora had suggested that he and House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles meet once a month.

"We've done that before, so I see nothing wrong with that," said the senator when asked whether the upper chamber had given him blanket authority to agree to the Zamora proposal.

Pangilinan said the meeting laid the groundwork for an "expanded meeting" in which Drilon and Speaker Jose de Venecia could sit down to rekindle inter-chamber cooperation and courtesy.

Locsin credited Fuentebella with initiating the meeting.

He told the INQUIRER that House members had relayed to the Senate, through Pangilinan, that it had been improper of the senators to accuse them of plotting to restore the full amount of their pork barrel through the bicameral conference committee.

"The issue is dead, beaten to the ground. It died already from exhaustion," said Locsin.

He said the senators' claim that they were afraid the House might just opt for a reenacted budget was illogical.

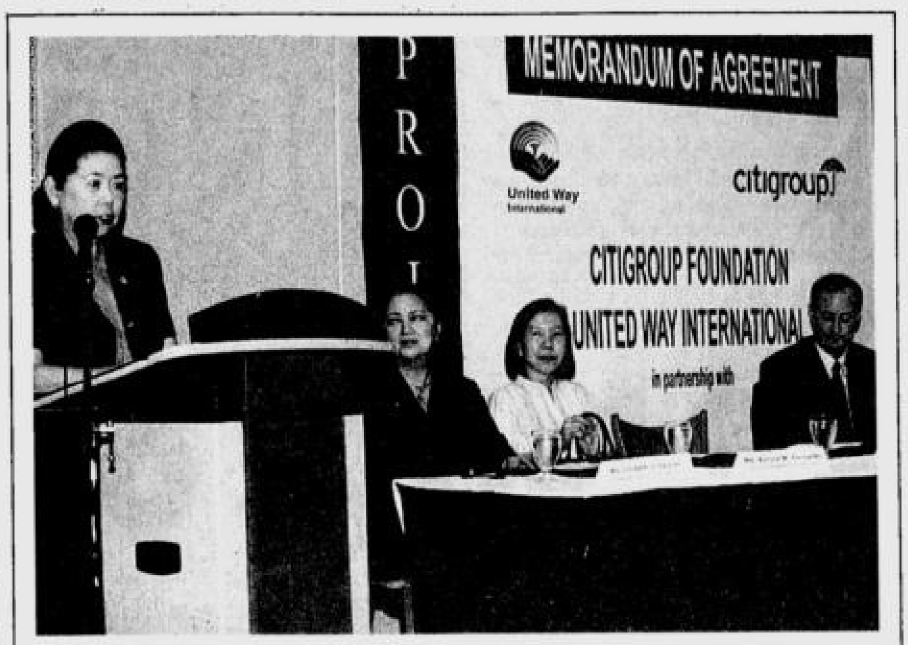
Villar earlier accused the House of deliberately delaying the approval of the 2005 budget to pave the way for a reenacted budget so the pork barrel of the congressmen would remain intact. He noted that while the Senate had already appointed its representatives to the bicam, the House had yet to do so.

"If they are always afraid of that, then they should not question anymore (the budget). Why did it take them three weeks to do so? On the first day, they should have announced, 'we accept it,'" said Locsin.

The Senate adopted the House-approved version of the 2005 budget which contained the lower pork barrel amounts allegedly to foil the congressmen's plan to restore the full amount during the bicam.

Locsin surmised that the real story was not about pork barrel, or the threat of a reenacted budget, but "with what they (senators) say is the unfounded accusation of Sen. Ping Lacson of padding" the pork barrel funds of senators by P1.3 billion.

"I told (Pangilinan), if you have problem with Ping, you take care of it yourselves but don't go blaming other people. Don't drag in the House," he said.



PROJECT BLUE SHINES

INQUIRER Chair Marixi R. Prieto delivers her message as Philippine Business for Social Progress trustee at the signing of the Citigroup Project B.L.U.E. (Buildings for Literacy, Understanding and Education) memorandum of agreement with the Department of Education yesterday in Makati City. Looking on are, from left, Citigroup corporate affairs head Lilibeth Fajardo, Adopt-a-School program director Aurora Felizardo and Citigroup country officer James Hunt.

RUDY ESPERAS

On Women's Day, Miriam raps gender bias

FEISTY Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago marked International Women's Day yesterday with a denunciation of the alleged gender bias in government.

That she will never become Senate president was proof that women continue to suffer from gender bias, the two-term senator said.

"How many times have we heard of women topping the bar and other competitive examinations, and graduating summa and magna cum laude from our universities? Yet how many women have been Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Senate president, speaker of the House, or Ombudsman?"

"Zero!" said Santiago, answering her own question.

In a statement, Santiago said women are relegated to second-level career positions and denied access to power structures and positions of leadership in government.

"The proverbial glass ceiling still exists. The message that the system is telling us is clear—women can only fill certain positions in government and rise no higher," she said.

The fact that the highest office in the land is occupied by a woman is the exception rather than the norm, according to her.

Santiago noted that while women comprised 53 percent of the 1.45 million government employees, men held the bulk of key appointive positions while women were relegated to lower positions that did not involve policy-making.

This results in women's issues like reproductive health, gender-based violence and discrimination being relegated to the sidelines in government policy-making, she said.

Santiago said the situation in Senate was no better, with only four of 23 senators being women.

"I will probably never be elected Senate president because of my sex, but certainly not because of my sex appeal," quipped Santiago, a former trial court judge and Cabinet secretary who nearly won the presidency in 1992.

Santiago noted that there were only 30 women representatives among the 212 regular members of the House and four out of 24 party-list representatives.

Because of the low representation of women in Congress, not enough gender-responsive laws have been enacted, the senator said. *Juliet-Labog-Javellana*

GMA displeased by Senate rejection of VAT rate hike

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.
and Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo was visibly displeased yesterday over the rejection by the Senate ways and means committee of her proposal to increase the value-added tax rate to 12 percent.

"This is a work in progress," said the President as she stressed that she was looking forward to the bicameral conference committee's meeting to hammer out a final version of the VAT reform bill.

"I maintain the faith that Congress will come out with a VAT law that will signal to the world that we have turned the corner," Ms Arroyo said at a press briefing at a World Bank forum in Davao City. *(See related story below.)*

"You heard the World Bank express the concern of the international community—they want a VAT that is high quality which means higher rates, wider coverage and easier to administer," she said.

The House version of the bill hewed to the original proposal of the President who is targeting at least P80 billion in new revenues to enable her to reduce the budget deficit to zero within the next six years. She said she was counting on the increased VAT to deliver the bulk of these revenues.

The Senate ways and means committee opted to maintain the VAT at the present 10 percent. Sen. Ralph Recto, the committee chair, claimed that lifting the VAT exemptions on fuel, power and professionals alone would yield P81.8 billion in new revenues, or better than the P71.21 billion target of the House version.

Recto said the Senate version of the VAT reform bill sought to mitigate the effect of the VAT on consumers by reducing the excise and franchise taxes on petroleum and power utilities and by raising the corporate income tax.

He said the prices of diesel and power could go up by P3 per liter and 90 centavos per kWh, respectively, under the 2-percentage point increase in the Malacañang and House versions.

He argued that with the retention of the 10 percent VAT rate and the lifting of exemptions, there would be a "lower" hike of 60 centavos per liter in diesel prices and 40 to 50 centavos per kWh of power.

Recto said the Malacañang and House version of the VAT reform bill would also result in higher inflation than his committee's version.

"The inflationary pressure of a 12 percent (VAT rate) is four times more than our proposal in the Senate," Recto told reporters.

The Senate yesterday opened floor debates on the Recto committee report to stay ahead of the March 18 Lenten break of Congress.

Senate President Franklin Drilon called a caucus of the Senate majority yesterday to come up with a "common position" on the Recto report and to address concerns on the measures to fast-track its approval.

But no consensus was reached during the caucus, Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said.

Gloria vows no more borrowing to stem gov't budget deficit

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday reiterated the government would no longer rely on borrowings to help stem its huge deficit problem.

The President made the announcement the World Bank 2005 Philippine Development Forum in Davao City, declining to comment on the recommendation of the Bush administration to slash the United States' aid package to the Philippines next year.

"We are really grateful for our Official Development Assistance partners, but rather than increase (our borrowings), what we really want to do is consolidate and prioritize our borrowings," Ms Arroyo said.

World Bank country director for the Philippines Joachim Von Amsberg said multilateral donors would raise development assistance to the Philippines if the government speeded up its fiscal reform program.

"Several of the larger official development assistance (ODA) partners indicated their willingness to go beyond current programs and consider substantially increased financial commitments if and when the country established a track record of significant and sustained fiscal actions," Von Amsberg said.

He did not cite actual figures.

Donor agencies had welcomed the passage of two key tax measures backed by Ms Arroyo and threw their support behind what they said was a "high-quality" bill raising the value-added tax rate to 12 percent from 10 percent, Von Amsberg said.

He said a new VAT system would raise the tax rate and widen the tax base, while keeping its administration simple.

However, there was a strong view that additional tax revenues would be needed in an effort to reduce the deficit, Von Amsberg said.

The VAT bill is among several measures the President is pushing for passage in Congress in a bid to generate additional revenues to help pay off huge debts and keep the budget deficit at manageable levels.

The budget deficit hit P16.5 billion in January and is on track to be within the target ceiling for the first three months of the year, the finance department said earlier.

The figure is about 21 percent of the P77.8-billion ceiling for the first quarter.

Last year, the government posted a budget deficit of P186.1 billion or 3.9 percent of gross domestic product. *With AFP*

Prices of goods stable, says Noli

THE PRICES of basic commodities have remained stable despite the fuel price increases and the threat by Congress to expand the value-added tax and lift tax exemptions on certain goods and services, Vice President Noli de Castro said yesterday.

In his report to President Macapagal-Arroyo and members of her Cabinet during the National Economic Development Authority meeting in Davao City yesterday, De Castro, presidential adviser on price monitoring, said the increase in the prices of other goods was still "not radical" and well "within foreseeable ranges."

De Castro, in his report, said the National Price Coordinating Council, which he heads, held two major meetings with industry players this year—on Jan. 9 and on Feb. 28.

During the first meeting, tin can manufacturers said that because of unabated increases in world market prices, they were forced to increase local prices by 5 percent, which in turn would impact on the retail price of canned goods.

De Castro said the increase in canned goods could have been imposed last Christmas had not representatives of the tin can and food processing companies agreed to seek other options, such as address huge shipping expenses, to hold back increases. *Cynthia Balana*

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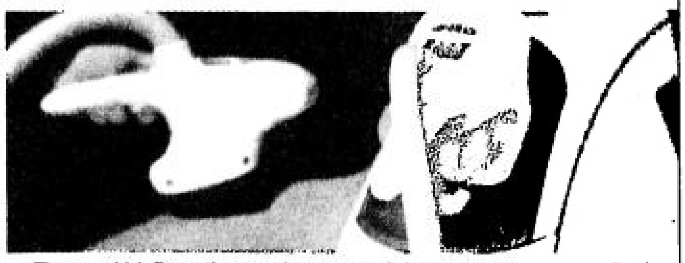


The new VelaSmooth smoothens out cellulite and re-shapes your body.

Most women have a few inches of fat here and there on their body. If left unattended, it builds up, gets trapped inside and forms the dreaded cellulite: that spongy, shadowy, lumpy fat that looks like an orange peel. It's rippled, dimpled and downright ugly as it makes your thighs and buttocks bulge unevenly. Genetics plays a major role in cellulite formation. You can't escape from it, whether you're young or advanced in years. Not even if you're slim or overweight. You can exercise and diet constantly, you can try to suck it all off through liposuction. But you can never get rid of it. Creams, gels or other over-the-counter products -- none of them really work.

Until now! Marie France Bodyline is proud to introduce a new innovation that will make your bumpy body bulges and cellulite problem non-existent. **VelaSmooth** is the latest non-invasive slimming treatment that uses Electro-Optical Synergy (ELOS) technology, which combines infrared light and radio frequency together with skin contouring action to reduce your fat bulges, improve your body shape and get rid of ugly surface fat such as cellulite.

Cristina after the treatment: "It's gonna smoothen out the cellulite!"

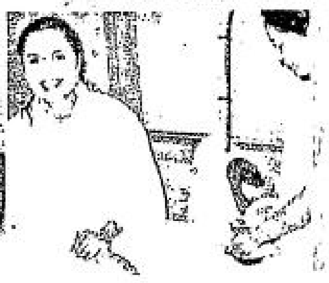
Marie France's Dr. Ariel Torres was recently trained in Canada with Syneron, the makers of the VelaSmooth machine who developed the technology with Dr. Stephen Mulholland of SpaMedica USA. Dr. Torres explains how the treatment's state-of-the-art technology works. "Infrared light increases circulation in the treated areas so that energy stored in fat would be available for burning. Radio frequency ensures that the infrared is focused on the fat problem. Lastly, the suction helps to contour the body and create smoother, shapelier curves." Based on treatment studies, VelaSmooth is proven to give remarkable results with an average reduction in the following areas: Thighs – 4.18 cm., Abdomen-waist – 5.73 cm., Hips –5.86 cm., Braline – 4.4 cm., Calves – 2.2 cm., and Upper arms – 1.4 cm.

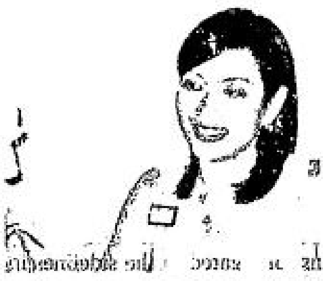
After a series of this 30-minute treatment session, cellulite-ridden areas will be smoothened out, fat metabolism will be further enhanced and a visibly sexier body will be formed. It's absolutely painless, very relaxing and it succeeds where other products have failed. Dr. Torres also adds, "At Marie France, we formulated our own VelaSmooth program based on the client's body figure problem. That's why we highly recommend this for women who are unsatisfied with their body shape. It can also be used when the client has loose skin as a result of weight-and-inch loss or as a final touch at the end of a slimming program. And yes, it can also be used in combination with other Marie France treatments."

Carmi Martin is all set for the VelaSmooth experience.

Marie France clients are impressed with what VelaSmooth can do. Actress Carmi Martin recounts, "I was invited to go to the beach before but I didn't join them. It may not be obvious to those who've seen me but I felt conscious because my tummy was showing and I didn't want to expose my cellulite when I wear a swimsuit." After trying VelaSmooth in just a few sessions, she's convinced! "I believe that it's going to be effective for re-shaping my figure. My tummy is flat again!"

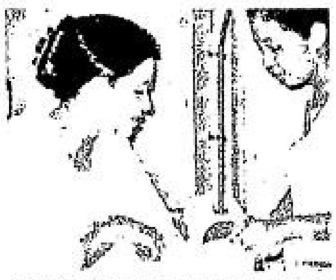
Former actress-turned-restaurateur Cristina Gonzalez-Romualdez got frustrated when she tried creams to lose her cellulite. "They didn't really help at all," she says, "I didn't notice any difference." Her experience with VelaSmooth has been very encouraging. "It's actually like a relaxing massage. And it's gonna smoothen out the orange-peel roughness of cellulite. I've heard that Carmi has been here for her 4th session and her tummy has flattened. So I'm waiting for my tummy to flatten, too. I can't wait to see the effects!"





Vikki Estacio on VelaSmooth: "It feels like a 'human touch'. I really enjoyed it!"

Vikki Santos-Estacio once tried three jars of a certain gel for cellulite removal. "I stopped using them," she remarks, "because there were no results. I just gave up on it." Her first session of VelaSmooth gave her a far more favorable impression. "I felt as if my cellulite was being stretched out. The heat has a calming effect...and the massage, it smoothens and it's VERY soothing!" She also noticed that, "It's just like a natural massage. It feels like a 'human touch' and not a machine that's doing it. I really enjoyed it!"



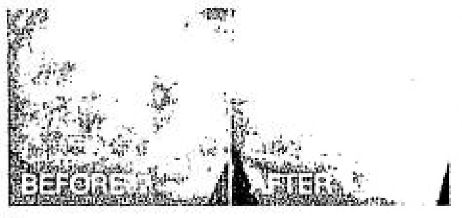
A Marie France therapist explains to Jeanette Pumaren the innovative functions of the VelaSmooth handpiece.

For Jeanette Jimenez-Pumaren, she didn't see her cellulite as a problem until it became disturbingly visible. "Most women won't admit it but I'm one of those who would want to look sexy...and that's hard to do when you're battling with cellulite." She found her winning edge with VelaSmooth. "The heat, the suction," she says, "was very comfortable and I didn't feel any pain." She laughingly adds, "Get those fats out! Crush them!"

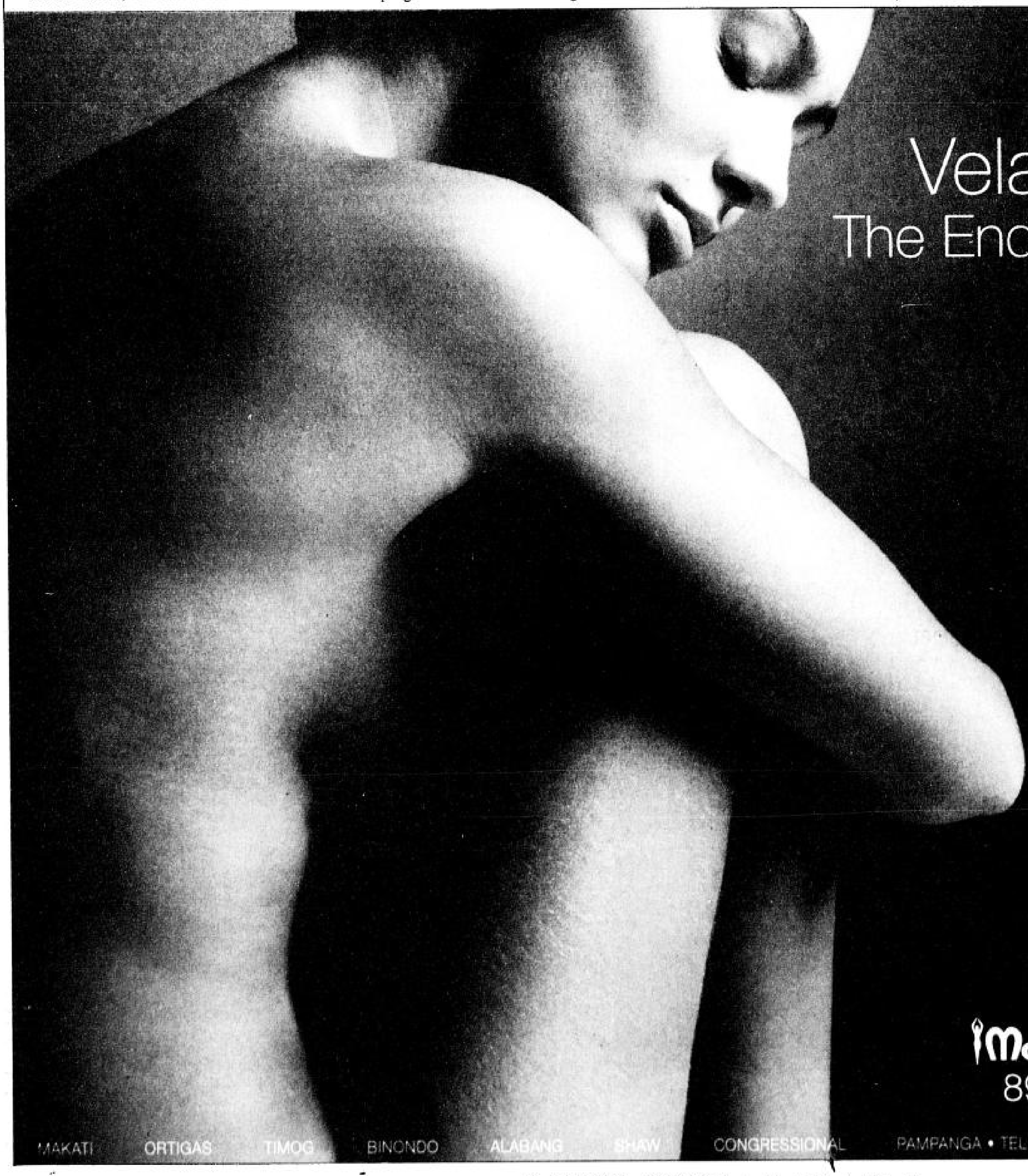
Stop using those creams and other so-called cellulite solutions. VelaSmooth is what you need to re-shape your body effortlessly and get rid of cellulite effectively. You'll see your bumpy bulges become smoother, your pounds will melt away and the next time you wear body-hugging clothes, you'll be amazed that it fits much better! Call Marie France at 894-BODY (2639) and ask about VelaSmooth.

VelaSmooth is the machine of the future...a non-invasive treatment that will finally smoothen those bumps.

1 month after 8 treatments



Excellent results 6 weeks after



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UN body endorses antiterror law for RP

From page A1

"preparatory acts" to terrorism.

The DFA released the list of recommendations yesterday to the media, saying: "The Philippines plays an important role in the world's antiterrorism campaign."

According to one recommendation, "certain acts related to financing, planning, preparation of terrorist acts or supporting terrorists, recruitment of members of terrorist groups, supply of weapons, etc." should be outlawed.

Another recommendation reads: "Terrorism is of vital national and international concern, which requires the immediate enactment of adequate laws in all countries."

There are 10 draft antiterror bills pending in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The Philippines chairs the newly formed UNSC Resolution No. 1566 committee, which deals with terrorist groups and individuals outside the al-Qaida and Taliban grouping, and also heads the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Counter-Terrorism Task Force, the DFA said.

Among those who attended the UN-led workshop were Rep. Simeon Datumanong, chair of the House committee on justice, and representatives of the justice department, Anti-Money Laundering Council and Office of the Executive Secretary.

Barangay registration

The government has been pushing for the establishment of a national identification system to go with the passage of an antiterror law.

Toward this end, Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes yesterday said the mayors of Metro Manila had adopted his proposal that each resident in every barangay be registered.

"As soon as possible," barangay officials will do the rounds of Metro Manila communities to collect the residents' personal data, including complete name, address, place and date of birth, gender, civil status and occupation, Reyes said.

The registration (or numbers system) will have three phases: collection of data from the residents, cleansing of the database of inaccuracies, and issuance of a registration number to each resident.

Reyes said he and the mayors had agreed that operational details—such as the age at which residents would be obliged to register—would be ironed out in other meetings.

The collection of residents' records is mandated in Section 394 of the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991 and just needs strict enforcement by local officials, Reyes said.

The records will form part of the database of a national ID system, he said, adding:

"We are in the process of coming up with a draft [memorandum] that will enjoin local government units outside Metro Manila to strictly enforce Section 394 of the [LGC].

"[Barangay officials] will be violating the law if they don't comply with the provision."

'It will stand'

According to Reyes, further legislation was unnecessary as far as the barangay ID scheme was concerned because the LGC already provides for it.

Asked if the barangay registration would serve the purpose of controlling crime and terror even without a national ID system, he said: "Yes, it will stand."

Reyes addressed the "money" problem by saying that in lieu of ID cards, residents would be assigned numbers.

He said the barangays would collect the data in their computers.

In the absence of a computer in a barangay, the local government unit will provide one. "That will only be [roughly] P25,000," he said.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, chair of the Metro Manila Mayors League, said the barangay registration would be implemented in all areas of the metropolis.

He said this would "form the basis of the city ID."

But nongovernment organizations in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations believe that apart from an antiterror law, civil society is a potent force that can play a big part in resolving—and preventing—armed conflict.

Members of the Asean NGOs are in Manila for the conference of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), which started yesterday.

The GPPAC aims to discuss ways to strengthen the relationship between civil society, the government and the United Nations with regard to conflict prevention and peace-building.

"Any conflict in this world can no longer be resolved by any one actor. There must be a partnership between the government and the people, and that's what we are trying to do," said Gus Miclat, executive director of the Initiatives for International Dialogue, the GPPAC initiator.

Miclat said the US-led war on terror had spawned adverse effects in Southeast Asia, thus the need for Asean countries to discuss ways to address the matter.

He cited as an example the ongoing clashes between government troops and separatist rebels, which had displaced thousands of civilians.

Out of the box

Keynote speaker Dr. Mary Racelis, a member of the panel on UN civil society relations and a sociology professor at Ateneo de Manila University, said civil society was important because it enabled people to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence.

She said that instead of using fear or coercion and imposing solutions to problems, NGOs were resorting to discussion, debate and other alternative ways of appealing to reason to resolve feuds.

"You've heard of the term 'thinking out of the box.' Well that's what civil societies do, especially the NGOs," Racelis said.

She said this was specially important because, she pointed out, the dimensions of warfare today had changed and people must find new ways to deal with it.

Racelis also said it had been acknowledged that the violation of human rights laws was no longer a side effect of warfare but its core.

This was different from the situation in World War I, when more soldiers than civilians were victimized, or in World War II, when an equal number of soldiers and civilians were affected, she said.

Giving voice to victims

Racelis said NGOs had been able to provide checks and balance by giving voice to the excluded members of the community, like women and children.

"The most victimized by conflicts often do not have a say [in things]," she said, adding that NGOs were also a form of empowerment because they had allowed people to organize themselves for a common goal.

Racelis also cited the importance of a global network of NGOs: "The values that go with global civil society is democratization and the global rule of law."

She said the global society movement had likewise made leaders more accountable to the international community for their actions.

The GPPAC will also hold dialogues with UN representatives and public fora in the coming days.

The conference delegates will come from Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Burma (Myanmar), Vietnam, East Timor, the United States, Australia, Germany, the Netherlands and the Philippines.

Boy Negro stops singing

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE CANARY has stopped singing.

After initially cooperating with the police, bombing suspect Gappal Bannah, alias Boy Negro, has apparently decided to keep his mouth shut.

"He has stopped cooperating with the police," a senior intelligence official told the INQUIRER.

"After he was captured, he was talking to us freely. He even talked to the media ... But he won't talk now. He won't cooperate."

Asked why, the official said a lawyer had most likely advised Bannah against talking further to investigators.

Bannah, who surrendered last week, had said in media interviews that he was the one who supplied the explosives used in the Valentine's Day bombing of a passenger bus in Makati. The blast killed four people and wounded more than 100.

Police alleged the 24-year-old suspect was a member of the Abu Sayyaf bandit group under commander Abu Solaiman, which had claimed responsibility for the Feb. 14 bombings not only in Makati but in General Santos and Davao as well.

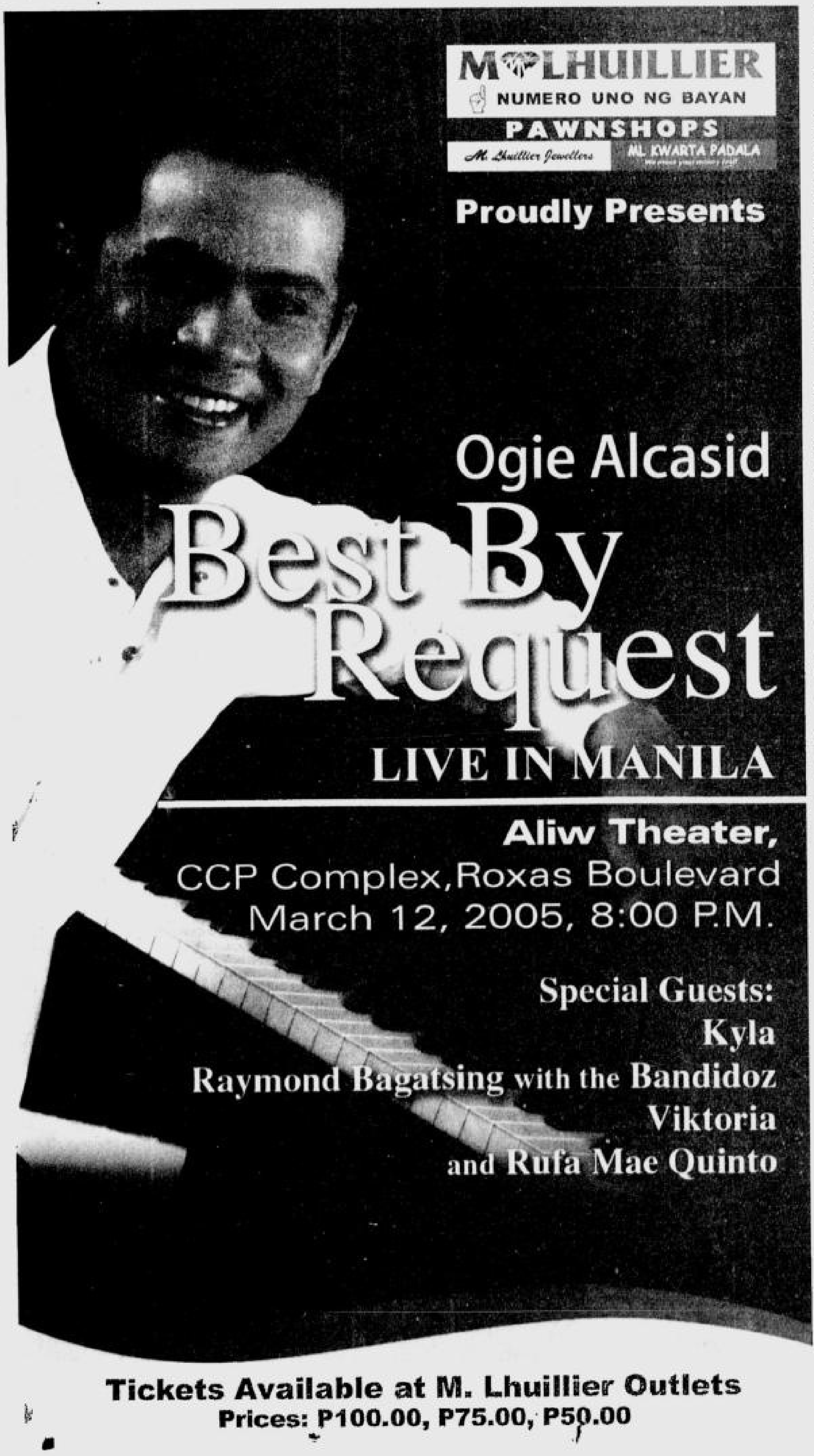
The official said intelligence authorities had wanted more "tactical information" from Bannah, including where he stayed in Metro Manila and who his contacts were.

The official said intelligence operatives were monitoring other suspected Abu Sayyaf members in the metropolis, including "Balik-Islam" or Muslim converts.

Police earlier said they were hunting at least one more terrorist cell, composed of three to four persons, in Metro Manila.

Two other men linked by the police to the Makati bombing and whom Bannah allegedly supplied with explosives—Gamal "Tapay" Baharan and Angelo Trinidad, alias Abu Khalil Trinidad—are also in custody.

A police document said Bannah was recruited by Solaiman in 2003 and started training in June 2004 on "practical, re-encounter and explosives course [for] three months."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Media terror gag may ...

From page A1

neo de Manila University and a member of a United Nations panel on civil society relations, raised the concern yesterday as Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu publicly distanced himself from the controversial proposal.

"That's a legitimate concern of the military but who decides, what's the criteria [for being regarded as a terrorist]?" Racelis asked. "It can easily be abused, even though that's not the intention. That's the danger."

Racelis made the remarks to the INQUIRER when asked about military apprehensions that terror groups might use the media as a vehicle for propaganda.

"On one hand, we don't want to encourage the killing of innocents," Racelis said. "At the same time, you have to keep the society open for discussion."

Speaking on the sidelines of an international conference on Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, Racelis said she did not believe media should be regulated.

"But it should set its own standards and police itself," she added.

Aware of responsibilities

She said most media outfits were owned by people with their own interests to advance or protect, and they must not forget to take stock of what their duties and responsibilities were.

According to Racelis, most civil societies feel that the media are not giving enough attention to issues that the nongovernmental organizations are concerned with.

She noted that the issue of terrorism seemed to dominate most media discussions when the issue might have deeper roots, like poverty, which were not being brought up.

Racelis said that when it came to deciding whether to support a clampdown on media or not, civil society would likely side with the media and push for openness.

'That's Adan's own'

General Abu told reporters the views expressed by Adan were his deputy's own and not necessarily that of the AFP.

"We do not have a stand on that yet. That is the personal position of General Adan," Abu said.

Asked what he thought of Adan's proposal, Abu said: "I don't think about it ... I'm more concerned about my role as chief of staff and how to fight the insurgents. Things like this, I leave that to other people."

In Congress' hands

Abu said reporters should have nothing to worry about, adding that what was important was that people were talking about the issue.

In the end, it is all up to Congress to decide on the matter, he said.

"This issue is being carefully talked about. We also balance press freedom and concerns of national security," he said.

Speaking on radio dzBB yesterday, Adan said the issue was not press freedom "but more [of] media responsibility."

"What is happening is that some media have become virtual mouthpieces of terrorist groups," he said.

"Definitely, we are against the curtailment of our freedom," he added.

At one point during the radio interview, Adan said: "We believe that [media] should have self-regulation."

Another ranking military official, Lt. Gen. Alan Cabalquinto, chief of the Armed Forces National Capital Region Command, also stressed the importance of media responsibility.

He implied that some media interviews could help the authorities in assessing the veracity of what a suspected terrorist was saying, and probably also help them track him down.

"All kinds of opportunities in the information war should be taken advantage [of]," he said.

"What I would [like to] say is that you should not kill the messenger, just get the message."

Media's limits

The question, he said, was distinguishing who was the messenger and who was the advocate.

"You've got to be responsible for your actions. You should remain a messenger," he said. Otherwise, the reporter becomes liable under the law, he said.

Asked if there was anything wrong with interviewing a terrorist, Cabalquinto said: "If you become the propounder of the message, then you are part of the problem already. I think you know what I'm talking about."

Arroyo welcomes KBP move

For her part, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday welcomed the decision by the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas to deny air time to terrorist groups.

Speaking before the World Bank 2005 Philippine Development Forum in Davao City, Ms Arroyo said the KBP decision showed "how sobriety and prudence are perceptively dawning upon the media."

"That is taking part in the high responsibility of remaking our national destiny," she said.

Long-running dilemma

The issue of how to deal with attempts by radical groups to use the media to air their views has repeatedly provoked debate among media organizations and academics.

In guidelines to its reporters, the prestigious British Broadcasting Corp. said: "We must not adopt terrorist language as though it were our own."

The BBC warned that its credibility could be undermined if "international audiences detect a bias for or against any of those involved. Neutral language is key."

It added: "The BBC interviews active terrorists only on occasions where we believe the public interest in doing so outweighs the outrage and offense such interviews are likely to cause our audiences."

Danger of labels

The concerns brought up by Racelis were also raised by other academics after the United States three years ago blacklisted the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army as terrorist organizations.

Law professor Marvic M.V.F. Leonen, in a 1992 article in the INQUIRER, cautioned against indiscriminate labelling of groups as terrorists.

"Today it may be the CPP, tomorrow it could be the Moro National Liberation Front, then Akbayan, Sanlakas and other legitimate forums of dissent," Leonen wrote. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

Rights abuse charges filed vs bomb suspects

By Armand N. Nocum

CHARGES of gross human rights violations were filed yesterday against members of the Abu Sayyaf terror group who had been linked to the deadly bombing on Valentine's Day that killed four people and wounded 64 in Makati City.

Named in a four-page complaint submitted to the Commission on Human Rights by the Department of Justice were Angelo Trinidad, alias Abu Khalil; Gamal Baharan, alias Tapay; a certain Boy Negro or Maidan; Khadaffy Janjalani, leader of the Abu Sayyaf group; Jainal Sali, alias Abu Solaiman, and a certain Jackie or Zacky.

Trinidad and Baharan are now in the custody of the Philippine National Police. The complaint did not say, however, if Boy Negro or Maidan was Gappal Bannah who surrendered to authorities in Camarines Sur last weekend.

Janjalani and Abu Solaiman, leader and spokesperson, respectively, of the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf, remained at large.

State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco said he filed the case on behalf of slain victims Jose Marie Daulong, Rosario Meracado, Bernardo Rosarito and Ronei Soriano, and 64 other bus passengers wounded in the attack.

"This is to show that not only government authorities can commit human rights violations; this holds true for rebels and terrorists," Velasco in a telephone interview.

"Although they claim that they have done this for a political cause, there is no denying that innocent lives were lost," he added.

In the complaint, Velasco said the bombing violated a provision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of persons."

He also cited the Philippine Constitution that says "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law."

On Monday, the DOJ filed with the Makati Regional Court multiple murder, multiple frustrated murder and illegal possession charges against the Abu Sayyaf members. *With a report from AFP*

SC won't reopen Ninoy case

THE SUPREME Court yesterday rejected a petition from the 16 accused in the double murder of opposition leader Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. and Rolando Galman asking for the reopening of the case.

The high tribunal said the petitioners' claim that they had "newly discovered evidence" was "unfounded and purely speculative."

In a unanimous decision denying the petition of the Public Attorney's Office, the high court said the 16 accused failed to present "concrete facts to support their crass claim."

"We are not moved by the petitioners' assertion that the forensic evidence may have been manipulated and misinterpreted during the trial of the case," said the 25-page resolution penned by Associate Justice Reynato Puno.

Most of the 16 who were all convicted for the double murder and sentenced to double-life imprisonment were members of the Aviation Security Command group that met Aquino on Aug. 21, 1983, as he got off a China Airlines plane at the then Manila International Airport.

The Marcos government claimed that Galman, an airport ground employee, had shot Aquino and was in turn shot by soldiers.

The soldiers were convicted in 1990 by the Sandiganbayan. The SC later affirmed the sentence. *Armand Nocum*

Unpaid overtime slows down air traffic controllers

THE COUNTRY'S more than 600 air traffic controllers nationwide have refused to do any more overtime work after the government failed to compensate them for the additional hours they had logged since October last year.

Because of this, there was a slowdown in the country's air traffic services causing delays in arriving and departing flights nationwide, as well as heavy air traffic, according to Nilo Jatico, Department of Transportation assistant secretary and Air Transportation Office (ATO) head.

Air traffic controllers, who work in three shifts had increased the five-minute separation time between aircraft to 15 minutes.

Jatico said that at 5 p.m. yesterday, President Macapagal-Arroyo approved overtime pay for the air traffic controllers. *Nikko Dizon*

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Filipino wins int'l award for work with mangroves

FILIPINO research scientist Jurgenne Honculada Primavera has won a Pew Fellow in Marine Conservation, the world's most prestigious award in marine conservation for her work in preserving and restoring mangroves in the country.

As one of five Pew Fellows in the field, she will receive $150,000 for a three-year project and become part of the world's premier network for ocean science and conservation.

"Dr. Primavera's work to preserve and restore mangroves is essential to maintaining the overall health of coastal areas, and she fills an important niche within the growing conservation legacy of the Pew Fellows," said Dr. Ellen Pikitch, executive director of the Pew Institute for Ocean Science at the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School and a Pew Fellow herself.

Her work will demonstrate that protecting mangroves can save lives and property from destructive typhoons, filter out silt runoff that kills coral reefs, provide nurseries to juvenile fish and shrimp, and renew fisheries catches, Pikitch said.

Primavera works as senior scientist at the aquaculture department of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center based in Iloilo.

She spent several years doing research on shrimp aquaculture, which often involves the clear-cutting of mangroves, before changing course to sustainable aquaculture.

Last year, she received an honorary doctorate from Stockholm University. Her citation read: "In cooperation with scientists from Stockholm University she has shown that mangroves are key areas for recruitment of fish and shrimp and that development of conventional shrimp farming may have far-reaching negative economic and social implications. In order to create sustainable alternatives she is now doing research on more sustainable integrated farming of shrimp, fish, crabs and mangroves."

She is also a member of the Swedish Royal Academy on Agriculture and Forestry.

Primavera holds a Ph.D. in Marine Science, a BS in Zoology cum laude from the University of the Philippines, and an MA in Zoology from Indiana University.

The Pew Fellows Program in Marine Conservation is part of the Pew Institute for Ocean Science, in partnership with the University of Miami. The institute strives to undertake, sponsor and promote world-class scientific activity aimed at protecting the world's oceans and the species that inhabit them.

Angat water level near-critical

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE WATER level at Angat Dam is nearing the critical level, threatening the farms in Bulacan and Pampanga and indicating a longer period of limited water supply for Metro Manila.

The National Water Resources Board recorded the water level at Angat at 189.16 meters as of 12 p.m. Monday. The level is expected to breach the 180-meter critical mark by April.

NWRB Director Ramon Alikpala said the water level was dropping by one meter every three days.

"We have to be prepared for the possibility of the dam reaching its critical level since the dam provides for the water supply requirements for domestic use of Metro Manila and the agricultural use of Bulacan and parts of Pampanga," Alikpala said.

The below-normal rainfall due to the El Niño phenomenon along with the damaged water-regulating structures in the Umiray tunnel were the biggest factors in the decrease in the dam's water level, the NWRB said.

The Umiray tunnel, which supplies 20 percent of the water needs of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, was damaged by the typhoons that hit the country late last year.

The MWSS is eyeing completion of the repairs by the end of the month.

"Officially, we're still feeling the effects of the El Niño. And if Umiray is not get fixed right away, the reduced water supply could last until June or July," Alikpala said.

The water supply for Metro Manila had been cut by 4 cubic meters per second since December. From 43.7 cm, it is now 39.7 cm, affecting mostly the areas serviced by Maynilad Water.

The 180-meter mark is considered a critical level because it prevents the water from reaching the irrigation systems of Pampanga and Bulacan due to the height of the structures.

"There is nothing we can do about the inconvenience it causes, but we can conserve [water]," Alikpala said.

Open Letter
To Mapua Students, Parents, and Alumni

Over the next five years, we shall be taking strategic moves towards elevating the school's quality of education to attain university status. As this develops, we wish to reassure our students, parents and alumni that **the name Mapua Institute of Technology shall remain.**

This reaffirms our earlier statement to the Mapua community that all currently enrolled students as well as incoming freshmen will be receiving diplomas and transcripts of records under the name Mapua Institute of Technology.

This is to ensure a smooth transition as we implement programmed changes in support of our thrust to achieve not only a university status but also interdisciplinary excellence and global recognition. Foremost of these changes will be the offering of academic degree programs in at least five independent fields of study.

In line with this objective, Mapua started I.T. programs in 2000; Biotechnology in 2003; and Nursing and Engineering Management in 2004. This year we are initiating new degree offerings in Business Management, Accounting and Psychology.

We understand the enormous tasks that lie ahead as we endeavor to achieve all these plans. We firmly believe that together, we shall accomplish what we have envisioned for Mapua - to be an international center of excellence.

Reynaldo B. Vea, Ph.D.
President
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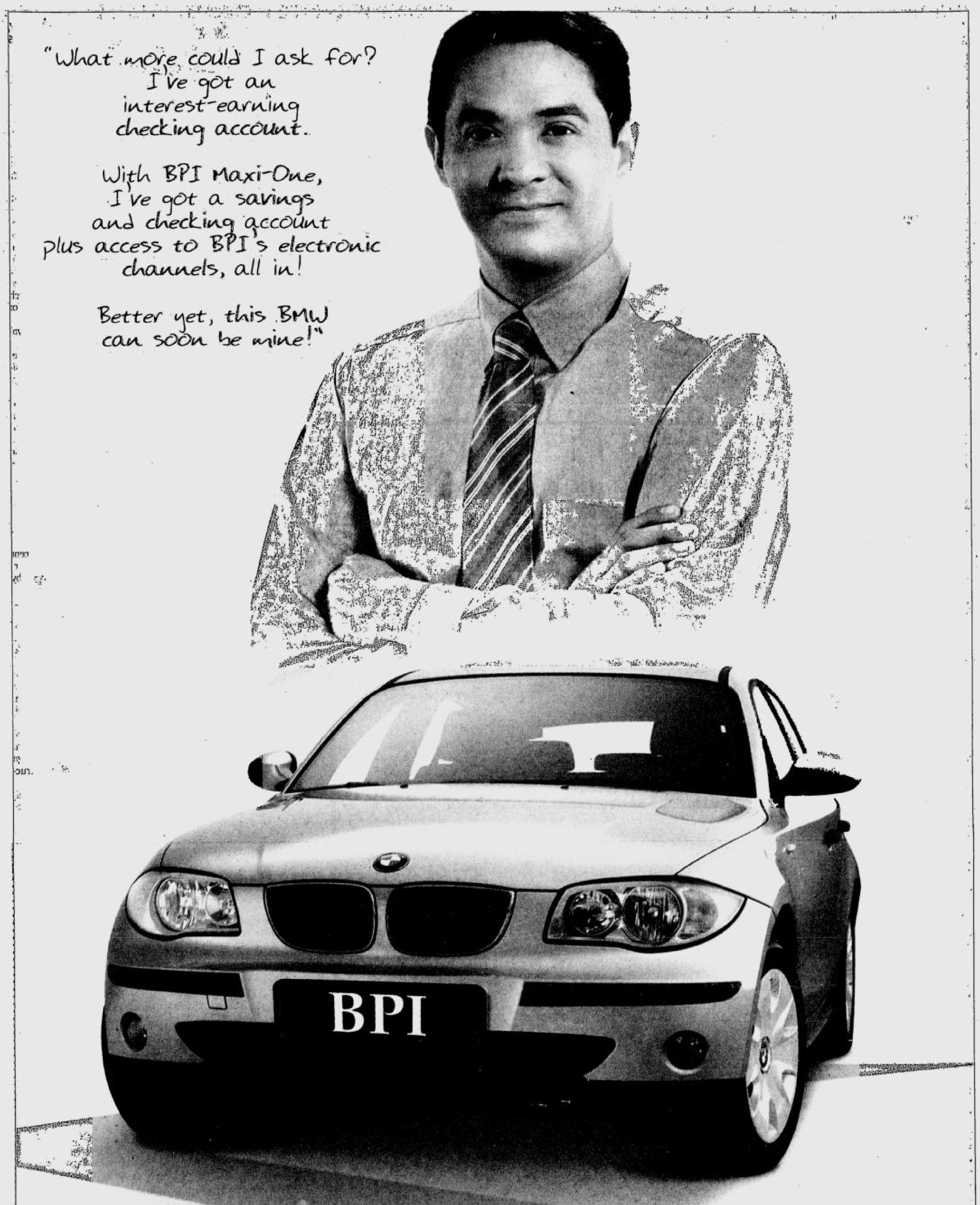
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With so many churches, why is RP still corrupt?

By Christian V. Esguerra

WITH so many churches, how come the Philippines is still corrupt?

The head of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches yesterday posed this question as he challenged the 20,000 churches under the group's wing to go through a process of self-examination.

At present, there are 51,555 evangelical and Protestant churches in the country, accounting for 9 percent of the population, according to Bishop Efraim Tendero, citing findings by the research project "The Church in the Philippines" by Dr. Manfred Kohl.

The number is on top of the members of the Catholic Church that accounts for at least 81 percent of the population, according to the study.

"Are we making an impact on our society?". Tendero asked yesterday during the book's launching at Club Filipino in San Juan, Metro Manila.

"We are known to be the only Christian nation in Asia but we are also the second most corrupt in this area of the world," he said.

While around 49,000 churches have sprouted over the past 25 years, the corruption index in the country has also increased, according to Tendero.

"We have no research data correlating both factors," he said in a speech. "But we have to ask the question."

Salt and light of society

What is apparent, he said, was that churches—despite their number—have not served enough as "the salt and light of society to make a difference."

"Our impact in society is not felt," he said. "Let us engage in socio-political concerns. Let's participate in the fight against corruption. Let's provide solutions [to the problem], not just an analysis."

Part of the reason is probably the fact that many of these churches are still in the "early stage of adolescence," having been established only in the past two decades, the bishop said.

Protestant and evangelical churches are obviously going through problematic times as pointed out by Kohl's study.

Mentoring program

The number of churches may be huge but "they are unwilling to work together with others," Kohl said at the press conference. "You have to find ways to do things together."

Training future leaders is also an issue. Kohl lamented the absence of a mentoring program among the country's evangelical churches.

This is so despite the presence of 367 training institutions all over the Philippines, he pointed out. "We need a kind of handing it down," he said.

Training schools and their students are crucial in the affairs of the church, he said.

"Where the schools go, the church follows," he said. "In the end, the vision of the research is to see that the church of the Philippines will be more effective in the glory of God."

RP No. 2 on Asia . . .

From page A1

than that of her ousted predecessor Joseph Estrada, now on trial for alleged corruption, the consultancy group said.

The Philippine government lost about $48 billion to corruption over a 20-year period, according to a World Bank study in 2000. Morgan Stanley placed the losses at $204 billion between 1965 and 2001.

Singapore least corrupt

In the PERC survey, now into its 18th year, countries are graded between zero—the best possible score—and 10.

Singapore's grade was an almost pristine 0.65, followed by Japan at 3.46 and Hong Kong at 3.50.

Next, but far behind, were Taiwan at 6.15, South Korea at 6.50, Malaysia at 6.80, Thailand at 7.20, China at 7.68, India at 8.63, Vietnam at 8.65, the Philippines at 8.80 and Indonesia at 9.10.

The Arroyo administration has launched a campaign to crack down on corruption. It is conducting lifestyle checks on government officials, especially those working in the Bureaus of Internal Revenue and Customs.

But a former Hong Kong commissioner called on the government leadership to exert its political will in the fight against corruption.

Adviser from Hong Kong

Tony Kwok, former deputy commissioner of the Hong Kong Commission Against Corruption, made the appeal in Manila as he expressed honor for his appointment as chief adviser of the ambitious three-year Corruption Prevention Project of the Office of the Ombudsman.

"I am confident that given the effective enforcement and successful prosecution by the [Office of the Ombudsman] and the partnership approach in this corruption prevention project, it is possible that this three-year project will see a marked improvement in the eradication of corruption in this country," Kwok said. He is also an anticorruption presidential adviser.

The Office of the Ombudsman launched the anticorruption project in an attempt to reduce opportunities for graft in government, promote fair competition in business and provide agencies that offer services to the poor with more resources.

The project, which the European Union sponsors, was launched during a two-day anticorruption workshop, which started on March 2, at the Bay View Hotel in Manila.

The launching was attended by Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo, dignitaries from the EU and the British Council and some 100 participants from various government departments and agencies.

In the project, the Office of the Ombudsman will establish a closer partnership with civil society organizations, the public and other government agencies.

Make or break

In its report, PERC said "the issue of corruption could make or break Indonesia."

It said "relative outsider" Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was elected Indonesian president last year partly because voters were "disgusted with the corruption of an entrenched, secular elite."

PERC urged Yudhoyono to ensure that foreign aid was used transparently in projects that benefit people and areas affected by last December's tsunami that left more than 220,000 Indonesians dead or missing, mostly in Aceh province.

If the former general succeeds in fighting corruption, the economy would improve and radical Islamic groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah "will be much more marginalized and less of a threat to the country and the region."

Indonesia's post-tsunami relief program "presents a real opportunity to improve the governance and transparency standards" for disbursing aid money not only there but in other developing countries, PERC said.

At the other end of the scale, foreign businessmen have consistently rated Singapore as being the least corrupt country in Asia, but the view is not shared by opponents of the People's Action Party (PAP), which has ruled the city-state since independence in 1965, PERC said.

This could cause problems for Singapore overseas since key PAP critics live in exile and could raise questions about Singapore's "systemic integrity" as state-linked companies expand abroad, PERC said.

Thailand's image improves

Elsewhere in Southeast Asia, booming Thailand's image has improved following a crackdown on graft, but PERC said there were laws, regulations and practices "that benefit certain large industries and businesses, many of which happen to have close links with influential politicians."

In Malaysia, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has generated strong public support with his antigraft stance, but allegations of internal corruption in the ruling coalition have resurfaced, PERC noted.

Communist countries such as China and Vietnam take extreme measures against corruption such as executing offenders, but they still have a worse reputation than western countries because they lack democratic checks and balances and free elections, PERC noted.

It said corruption in China could potentially cause the most damage. "China's growing economic role in the region and the world ensures that the global fallout from any crisis precipitated by corruption on the mainland would be severe," the consultancy group said.

"In view of the growing reliance of multinationals on China as a production base, such a crisis would wreak havoc with a lot of companies' bottom lines," PERC said. *Reports from AFP, Reuters and Nelson F. Flores*

Most corrupt Asian countries

Survey of 900 expatriate respondents across Asia, Jan-Feb 2005

1	Indonesia	9.10
2	Philippines	8.80
3	Vietnam	8.65
4	India	8.63
5	China	7.68
6	Thailand	7.20
7	Malaysia	6.80
8	South Korea	6.50
9	Taiwan	6.15
10	Hong Kong	3.50
11	Japan	3.46
12	Singapore	0.65

Source: PERC 080305 AFP

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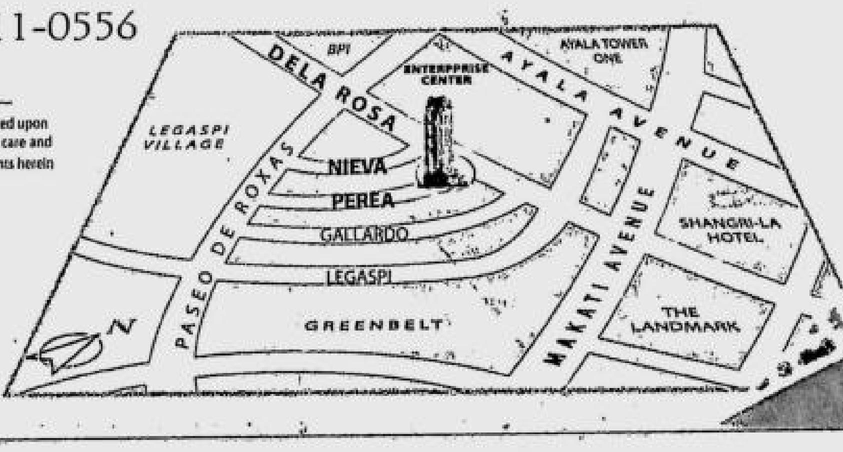

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Syria to pull back troops this month

DAMASCUS—Syria, under world pressure to quit Lebanon, promised on Monday to shift its troops to eastern areas this month, but the US dismissed the plan for failing to set a deadline for a full withdrawal.

The pullback would be the biggest single such move since Syrian forces intervened in Lebanon's civil war in 1976. It now has some 14,000 troops there, down from 40,000.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad agreed the withdrawal plan in talks with his Lebanese counterpart Emile Lahoud in Damascus.

The Syrian troops will complete their move to eastern Lebanon by March 31, said a statement after the talks. The Syrian and Lebanese military will then decide how long the Syrians stay there.

The plan means Syrian troops will be gone from most but probably not all of Lebanon before general elections due by May.

The United States considered such "half measures" unsatisfactory, White House spokesperson Scott McClellan said.

"This does not add .up to Syria leaving Lebanon. Nobody has said all troops are leaving Lebanon," said a state department official.

"We will continue to hold their feet to the fire, not accept half-measures and call a spade a spade—that is, when they make these announcements about a withdrawal that is neither complete or immediate, we will call it for what it is."

Germany, France and Britain urged Syria to move swiftly.

"We expect Syria to withdraw its troops and security services completely and as quickly as possible," German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and French President Jacques Chirac said in a joint statement.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said separately that Syria's move was welcome as a "first step," adding: "We expect to see rapid progress to the withdrawal of Syrian troops from the whole of Lebanon" in line with a UN resolution last year. *Reuters*

SYRIAN soldiers smile as they leave their position in Mdeirej, east of Beirut, on the main Beirut-Damascus highway that links the capital to the Bekaa Valley. AFP

27 killed in latest attacks in Iraq

SAMARRA, Iraq—Twenty seven people, mostly Iraqi soldiers, were killed in a series of attacks as Bulgaria joined Italy in demanding answers from Washington over the death of one of its soldiers in Iraq.

The worst bloodshed occurred in Balad on Monday, when a suicide bomber blew up his vehicle at the home of an Iraqi army officer, killing 15 people, including at least two soldiers, and wounding 23, police said.

In recent days, Iraqi commandos and US troops have stepped up operations in the area, a known stronghold of Sunni Arab insurgents, in search of suspects who might lead them to the country's most wanted man, al-Qaida frontman Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

The Jordanian-born militant is blamed for some of the deadliest bombings since the 2003 US-led invasion, as well as executions of foreign hostages.

His group was quick to take credit for a separate attack on an Iraqi army checkpoint further south in Al-Muradiyah, near Baquba, that left five soldiers and one assailant dead. The US military said the operation involved "20 terrorists" aboard five vehicles.

In Baquba itself four people were killed, including two policemen, when a car bomb detonated as officers passed on their way to the checkpoint attack, police said. Another 11 people were wounded.

Meanwhile, an interpreter was killed in Tuz, north of Baghdad, and a rebel was killed by the US army in an operation in Mosul.

Iraq's budding security forces face relentless attacks from insurgents determined to derail US plans to hand over security responsibility and pave the way for a withdrawal of foreign troops two years after the invasion.

A Jordanian businessman was kidnapped Friday in Baghdad, his brother in Amman said, adding that his captors have demanded a $250,000 ransom.

Washington meanwhile characterized as "absurd" allegations by Italian journalist Guiliana Sgrena, freed after a month in captivity in Iraq, that US soldiers deliberately fired at her convoy killing an Italian intelligence officer escorting her.

"It's absurd to make any such suggestion, that our men and women in uniform would deliberately target innocent civilians. That's just absurd," White House spokesperson Scott McClellan told reporters.

The US government has promised a full investigation.

Nicola Calipari, 50, has been hailed as a national "hero" and "martyr" for his role in saving the Il Manifesto correspondent, who was wounded in the shooting near Baghdad airport. *AFP*

Fans remember Diana as Charles marries Camilla

LONDON—Their archenemy is the woman they call "Cowmilla," their icon the late Princess Diana.

So it goes without saying that the Diana Circle—a group of fans who have vowed to preserve the princess' memory—disapproves of the impending nuptials between heir to the throne Prince Charles and his longtime companion Camilla Parker Bowles.

Instead, they will mark the wedding day April 8 by laying flowers outside Kensington Palace, the late princess' London home.

"Those who can't make it will display pictures of the princess in their windows," co-founder Joan Berry said Monday. "We are determined that Diana will not be forgotten."

On its website, which bears the slogan "Keeping Her Memory Alive," the Diana Circle promises to use its "combined strength" to promote Diana's image.

"The Diana Circle UK is nonpolitical but believes Diana had a raw deal in life and also in death," it says.

So far, the group has fired off angry letters to Charles' mother, Queen Elizabeth II, to Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and, according to some reports, has lodged a complaint against the marriage with the registrar-general.

There are also unconfirmed reports that some members may picket Charles and Camilla's civil marriage ceremony at Windsor town hall west of London.

Berry, who founded the group with her husband Alan, said that was not likely, since the group's main focus is writing letters.

The Diana Circle was founded on Aug. 31, 2001, the fourth anniversary of Diana's death in a Paris car crash.

Berry says some 1,000 people have contributed funds or helped in other ways, and that the group has an American affiliate.

In its letter to the queen, the Diana Circle protested the monarch's decision to approve the marriage.

"This is not a time for rejoicing but for sadness," the letter read. "If the marriage is allowed to proceed there is no doubt the monarchy will suffer damage and unpopularity never seen before... How can you permit such a disservice and unpopular occasion to take place?" Buckingham Palace refused comment. *AP*

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7 more human bird flu cases found in Vietnam

HANOI—Seven Vietnamese patients who had initially tested negative for bird flu have been found to have carried the virus, the World Health Organization said Tuesday after further tests by a laboratory in Tokyo.

All seven had since recovered, officials said.

"The results were positive in Tokyo in a WHO reference laboratory," said Peter Horby, a WHO epidemiologist in Hanoi.

Earlier this year, staff from the WHO, Japan's National Institute of Infectious Diseases in Tokyo and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia, began working with health authorities in Vietnam to improve the reliability of laboratory tests.

"Retesting detected H5N1 in specimens from seven persons," WHO said in a statement on its website.

"WHO is awaiting further details about these cases, including outcomes. Upon receipt of this information, WHO will also include these cases in the cumulative total for Vietnam."

A Vietnamese doctor in Ho Chi Minh City confirmed Tuesday "some" samples originally tested negative were found positive in Japan, without saying precisely how many.

"There are some differences in the tests between Vietnamese labs and others abroad," the doctor added, asking not to be named.

All the patients have recovered, he said. "WHO has not issued any standards for testing. Therefore, differences are understandable."

Peter Horby said more information was expected in the next few days.

"What it clearly means is that further support is necessary to make sure quality control is good" in the communist country's laboratories, Horby said.

But the results don't mean necessarily that Vietnam has a major problem in all its testing structures.

"Previously, all results from Vietnamese laboratories have been reliable. It could be just a problem with one lab," he said.

Four people are currently in hospital with the illness in Hanoi, three of whom are said to be in stable condition.

Monday, medical sources said a 26-year-old Vietnamese nurse who cared for a patient with bird flu in northern Vietnam had contracted the deadly virus.

It was still unclear whether the man contracted the virus from the patient or sick poultry.

Some experts believe the disease could trigger a devastating pandemic if the H5N1 virus mutates to a form easily transmissible among humans. *AFP*

Fire in Dominican prison kills 134

HIGUEY, Dominican Republic—Rival gangs battling over the drug trade in an overcrowded, vermin-infested prison set their bedding ablaze and blocked the entrance to their cellblock, killing at least 134 inmates in one of Latin America's worst jailhouse blazes.

Some died in a stampede to escape the flames after guards forced open the jammed door in the cellblock known as Vietnam, one survivor said, while others were killed by smoke inhalation.

Only 26 prisoners were rescued from the public jail in Higuey, 75 miles northeast of the capital on eastern tip of the island, said National Police Chief Manuel de Jesus Perez Sanchez. Eighteen were injured, four in critical condition, hospital officials said.

The disaster underscored the terrible prison conditions in the Dominican Republic, which has the most overcrowded jails in the Western Hemisphere, according to UN figures. Domingo Porfirio Rojas-Nina of the Dominican National Human Rights Commission said he has been complaining for six years that the Higuey prison "is the worst in the country. It is hell on earth. It is unfit for human beings."

Officials gave varying figures for the prison population, with one saying the burned cellblock held as many as 182. The confusion over the exact numbers illustrated some of the problems within the prison system.

Among the victims were four Americans from Puerto Rico convicted of cocaine trafficking. Two died and two were injured, officials said.

The violence began when one inmate shot and wounded another Sunday night and dozens of members of three gangs began fighting for control of who would sell drugs and cigarettes, said national prison director Gen. Ramon de la Cruz Martinez.

Guards broke up that fight, but about 12:30 a.m. Monday, prisoners began rioting, setting fire to pillows and sheets, said police spokesperson Gen. Simon Diaz.

The inmates had blocked the cellblock entrance to fight it out, said chief firefighter Nestor Vera.

"It's an incredible, mad thing," Vera said. "When we arrived, the door was blocked with the rubble from mattresses and wood beds the prisoners had used to seal the exit shut." They also damaged the padlock, he said, preventing a swift rescue. *AP*

Bush picks hardliner Bolton for UN job

WASHINGTON—US President George W. Bush named Monday a self-confessed United Nations critic and a hardline diplomat, John Bolton, to be ambassador to the world body.

Bolton, the current undersecretary of state for arms control, was picked for the key job "because he knows how to get things done," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said.

"He is a tough minded diplomat. He has a strong record of success and he has a proven track record of effective multilateralism," she told a media conference with Bolton by her side.

Bolton is a sharp critic of North Korea and other hardline regimes and had slammed the United Nations on many occasions.

He was also a strong advocate of US military action in Iraq, after it failed to win UN Security Council approval.

The failure was "further evidence to many why nothing more should be paid to the UN system," he had said.

If confirmed by the Senate, where is expected to draw fire from Democratic legislators, he would replace John Danforth, a former Republican US senator from Missouri who left the UN post in January after seven months on the job. *AFP*

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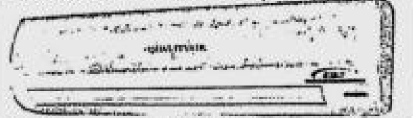

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- GOOD ENGLISH CONVERSATION
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- MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVE COURSE
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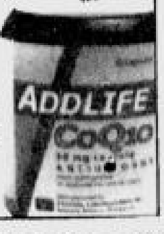
Dr Ricardo O. Fernandez finished his Doctor of Medicine at the University of Sto. Tomas. He is a consultant at the Makati Medical Center and Associate Board Examiner of the Philippine Board of Otolaryngology.



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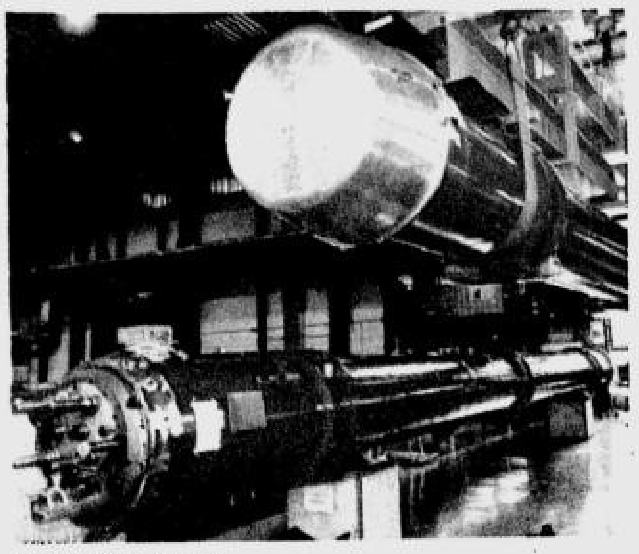

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Above picture shows the first superconducting magnets for the Large Hadron Collider at the European Organization for Nuclear Research, known by the French initials CERN, in Geneva, Switzerland. The magnets will be used in the LHC of the world's largest particle physics laboratory. AP

Pope back in Vatican in 2 weeks

VATICAN CITY—Pope John Paul II will probably return to the Vatican by Palm Sunday, the start of Holy Week leading to Easter, giving him up to 13 more days in the hospital to fully recover from throat surgery and to regain use of his voice, the Vatican said Monday.

A new medical bulletin said the 84-year-old Pontiff's condition continues to improve but gave no date for discharge from the hospital, where he was rushed Feb. 24 with a breathing crisis for the second time in a month.

However, papal spokesperson Joaquin Navarro-Valls told reporters John Paul will be back by Palm Sunday, which falls on March 20, although how he will participate in the Easter rites must still be decided.

Holy Week ceremonies include several Masses, an outdoor Way of the Cross procession at the Colosseum and a major address on Easter Sunday.

The spokesperson said the Pope has suffered no complications since the surgery to insert a tube in his windpipe, but that doctors have cautioned John Paul not to use his voice too much to ensure he makes a complete recovery.

"I think the Pope will be here for Holy Week, certainly," Navarro-Valls told reporters.

He said doctors would decide when the tube could be removed.

"The general conditions of the Holy Father continue to improve, which allows the Pope to spend long periods of the day in an armchair," the Vatican's latest medical bulletin said.

"No complications have arisen because of the tracheotomy surgery. Continual improvement can also be seen in speaking, thanks to the daily rehabilitation," it said. But it added that "doctors have prescribed a prudent limitation in the pope's use of his voice" to help his larynx, or voicebox, recover.

The Vatican said it would issue its next health update on Thursday.

Roman Catholics worldwide had been eagerly awaiting word on whether the Pope was making a strong enough recovery to participate in the run-up to Easter, the most solemn date on the Christian calendar.

At the hospital, Vatican officials released letters and drawings sent to the Pope by Italian third-graders, saying they were among the hundreds of get-well wishes received each day. The drawings showed a smiling Pope waving a cane, in his hospital bed and at a window giving his blessing.

A girl identified only as Sonia wrote from the island of Sardinia asking the Pope to come and bring his bathing suit "because the sea is beautiful and the thermal baths would be very good for you."

John Paul has Parkinson's disease, a progressive neurological disorder which affects muscle control, making speech and physical movement difficult. The increasing immobility, along with the stooped posture often suffered by Parkinson's patients, makes him highly vulnerable to medical complications, such as breathing problems.

On Sunday, the Pope made a silent appearance at a window of his 10th-floor hospital suite to bless the faithful gathered below—the second such appearance since he was rushed by ambulance to Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic hospital. *AP*

China's parliament accepts Jiang's final resignation

BEIJING—China's parliament Tuesday voted to accept the resignation of former supreme leader Jiang Zemin as chair of the state Central Military Commission, formally ending his political career.

The largely ceremonial position was Jiang's last high-level post in the government apparatus and his stepping down marks his full retirement.

In his resignation letter, Jiang said he "had always looked forward to the complete retirement from leading positions."

He proposed President Hu Jintao succeed him.

At the Great Hall of the People, 2,853 delegates attending the National People's Congress voted to accept the 78-year-old's resignation, eight were against and five were undecided.

Jiang had held the position for 15 years, ever since he was hastily installed as the head of the so-called third generation of leaders following the massacre of pro-democracy protesters on Tiananmen Square in 1989.

In a communique last year when he first tendered his resignation, the Communist Party's central committee praised him for grasping "the development trends of new military reforms in the world with his great insight."

"Under his leadership, national defense and the army modernization process achieved tremendous success," said the communique.

In terms of actual political significance, the resignation Tuesday pales in comparison with Jiang's September announcement that he had given up the Communist Party's CMC, which holds the real power over the military.

President Hu has already taken over all of Jiang's other responsibilities. *AP*

China's demand for wood a threat to Asia's forests

BEIJING—China's rising demand for wood threatens to devastate timber stocks in countries from Indonesia to Russia, the environmental group WWF said Tuesday, calling for more efficient wood use and measures to discourage illegal logging.

Although China still uses 17 times less wood per person than the United States, it is on course to become the world's top overall consumer within a few years, the WWF said in a report.

China imported about 42 million cubic meters of timber in 2003, more than half of it from Malaysia, Indonesia and Russia, according to WWF. It said imports are expected to triple to 125 million cubic meters a year by 2010.

Logging bans imposed by China in its mountainous west after flooding in 1998 have decreased domestic supplies.

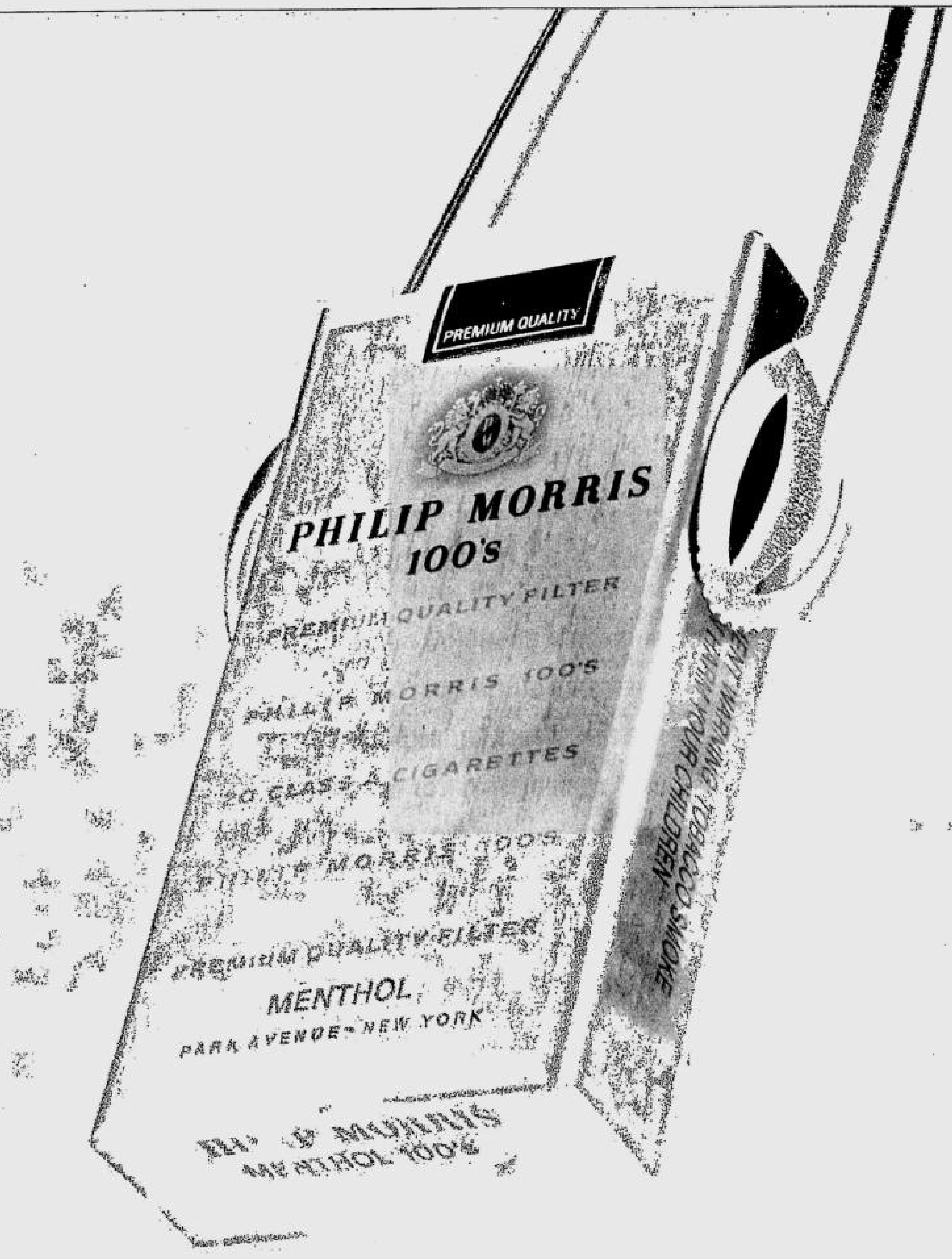
"Logging bans in China should not lead to forest loss in other parts of the world. Decisive action is needed to ensure that supply chains leading to or through China begin with well-managed forests," WWF International's director general, Claude Martin, was quoted as saying in a news release that accompanied the report.

China is now the second-biggest market behind the United States for timber, pulp and paper, but is expected to take over the top spot as its economy grows and demand for construction materials and furniture expands.

Increased Chinese demand could take a greater toll because the country is a major destination for wood that was illegally harvested or taken through unsustainable means such as by felling natural forests, according to WWF, formerly known as the World Wide Fund for Nature.

China could reduce the damage by developing environmentally sustainable forestry, recycling and taking other measures to reduce the amount of wood that goes to waste, the report said.

It said China and its suppliers could enforce measures such as tracing the source of wood imports. *AP*



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LONDON—British government proposals to fight terrorism suffered a blow Monday when the upper house of parliament voted to allow judges, not a Cabinet minister, to impose restrictions including electronic tagging and curfews on suspects.

The unelected House of Lords voted by 249 to 119 in support of the opposition Liberal Democrat amendment, which came during the detailed committee stage of debate on the Prevention of Terrorism Bill.

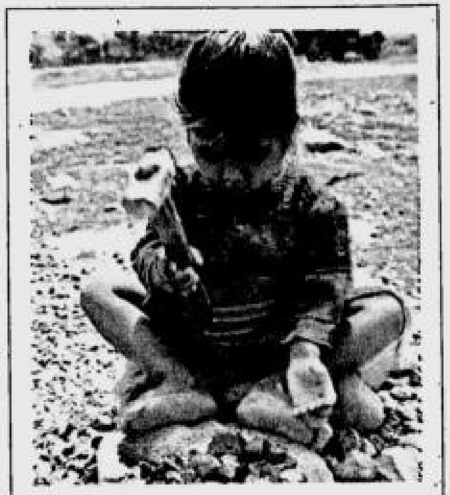
The decision modifies the Labor government's initial antiterrorism legislation, which gave the home secretary the right to authorize "control orders" ranging from tagging, curfews and bans on phone and Internet use to full house arrest.

Home Secretary Charles Clarke has already conceded judicial involvement for house arrest orders in an attempt to achieve consensus in the House of Commons.

But parliamentary opposition to the bill remains strong, as even members of Prime Minister Tony Blair's Labor government have demanded that judges be allowed to rule on other control orders as well.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act was passed only narrowly by the House of Commons last week in a 272-219 vote amid a revolt among backbench Labor lawmakers. It is meant to replace a previous antiterrorism measure allowing foreign suspects to be jailed indefinitely without trial, which was ruled unlawful last December.

That law—the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001—expires on March 14. *AFP*


CHILD LABORER
Rina Kumari, 5, cracks stones on the banks of the Mahananda river in Siliguri, northeast India. Over 400 million people in India live below the poverty line. REUTERS

Tens of thousands raped in east Congo

BUNIA, Congo—Some 100,000 people have fled their homes during the latest bloodletting in Congo's east, a region where tens of thousands of women and children have been raped in recent years, aid and rights groups said on Monday.

An explosion of violence in the mineral-rich, northeastern district of Ituri since late last year has damaged efforts by the former Belgian colony to recover from a wider five-year war.

"The humanitarian situation has become catastrophic since the outbreak of fighting in December," Modibo Traore, the head of the UN Office for the Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs in Ituri, said in an interview.

"We are now looking at about 100,000 displaced in all, including about 70,000 that are in the camps," he said.

Traore warned that UN military operations against militia in Ituri, which came just days after the killing of nine Bangladeshi peacekeepers this month, would make matters worse as gunmen would vent their anger on long-suffering civilians.

He was speaking in Ituri's capital Bunia as Human Rights Watch (HRW) published a report saying government soldiers and rebels had raped tens of thousands of women in the east of Democratic Republic of Congo since fighting broke out in 1998.

Fighters on all sides of Congo's war have raped civilians on a massive scale, but only a few have ever been tried, HRW said.

"Sexual violence has shattered tens of thousands of lives in Congo, but fewer than a dozen victims have seen their assailants prosecuted," said Alison Des Forges, senior adviser to HRW's Africa division.

Fighting between ethnic-based militia in remote Ituri has killed more than 50,000 people since 1999. The latest clashes started in December between Hema and Lendu militia in the Djugu territory, not far from the border with Uganda. *Reuters*

Bolivia's president offers resignation

LA PAZ—Bolivian President Carlos Mesa on Monday offered his resignation to Congress in exasperation at a series of social conflicts that he said were "strangling" the South American nation.

But lawmakers expressed doubt about granting him his wish.

The head of the legislature, Hormando Vaca Diez, said his "initial personal impression" was that Congress will reject the resignation.

And opposition leader Evo Morales, the president's long-time rival, said Mesa "has to fulfill the mandate given to him" until 2007.

The Roman Catholic church urged the population to remain calm, while the head of the armed forces, Admiral Luis Aranda, said that troops were ready to intervene if police were unable to contain possible violence stemming from Mesa's announcement.

Hundreds of supporters showed up at the presidential palace to back the president, while thousands in El Alto, a hotbed of opposition located 12 kilometers from La Paz, called Mesa a "traitor."

Mesa's decision also sparked fears of a return to Bolivia's authoritarian days, but Aranda discarded such an option, saying he would respect the constitution. *AFP*

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Ignorance and insecurity

EDITORIAL

WHEN Lt. Gen. Edilberto Adan, deputy chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, proposed to restrict media interviews with groups engaged in fighting the government, saying that broadcasting by radio, television, or disseminating by print aids terrorism, he caused a ruckus. Politicians were divided on the issue, and so were the media. The administration is pushing the punishment line, while officials who disagree oppose it. Media groups such as the National Union of Journalists have denounced the proposal, while the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas, whose officers recently took their oaths before the President in Malacañang, has come out in support of the proposal.

In the immediate aftermath of the Valentine's Day bombings, it was certainly chilling to hear an Abu Sayyaf spokesman not only taking credit for the carnage, but also gloating about how they had carried them out. Those who wished to inflict harm on innocent civilians to further their political and religious ends certainly took heart from the gloating. However, it is is equally certain that the majority of decent, peace-loving people, regardless of their current opinion of the government, found the Abu Sayyaf statements cruel, disgusting and condemnable.

But if it were up to the military, the reporters who found and interviewed Abu Solayman would have been locked up. And this is precisely why such things should not be left to the military.

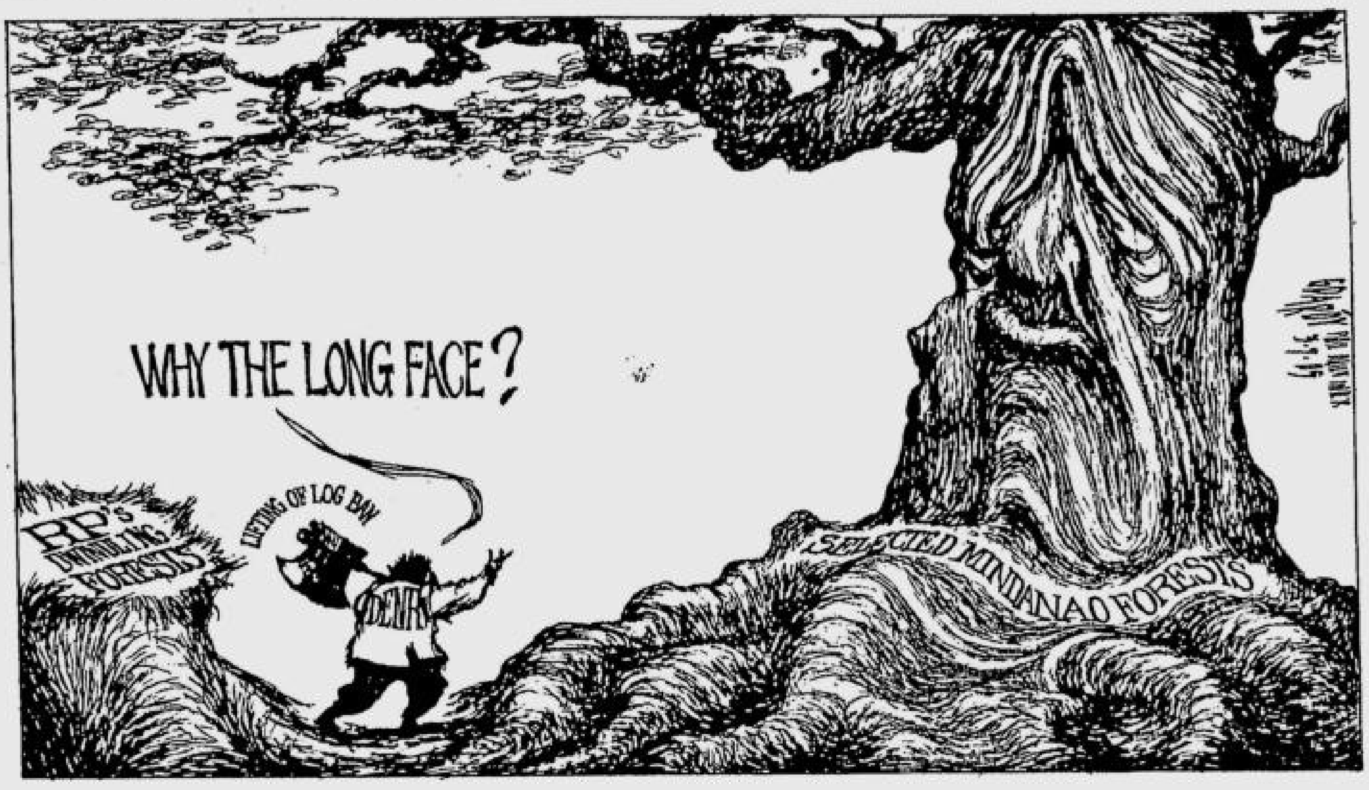
If it weren't for the media, the public would not have known, beyond a shadow of a doubt, who perpetrated the bombings. Neither would the public have known the reasons behind the bombings. Fear and panic as a result would not only have continued unabated, but that most corrosive and poisonous state to a society—ignorance and suspicion—would have been fostered as well. To our mind, there is no greater threat to national security than the insecurity bred by ignorance. Seeing that the military and police, whether by commission or omission, obviously failed in ensuring public safety by the mere fact that the bombings took place, it would be quite reasonable to hold any military statements on the incidents under suspicion.

This stems from the unfortunate tendency of the military and police, particularly in the past, to camouflage their incompetence by lashing out at the easiest targets available. Or by generally lashing out in general, to soothe their wounded pride by bearing down heavily on the population. The country cannot help suffering from a traumatic suspicion of military rhetoric and conclusions, which is why the media must serve as an independent verifier of facts. It is a sign of the short-sightedness of some military officials and allied civilian politicians that their reaction to a threat is to shoot the messenger.

The majority of Filipinos, regardless of their political leanings, profession, or circumstance in life, know right from wrong, and are loyal, law-abiding citizens of this country. They can be trusted to know right from wrong, and certainly, to at the very least know terrorism when they read, hear or see it. Our public officials must adopt an attitude of trust for the citizens rather than actively distrusting them, even if the citizenry actively distrusts our officials and officers. As we've said, the distrust felt by the public (and media are part of this) stems from decades of bad experiences at the hands of officials and officers.

This is not to say that all media are saints, that all media people are absolutely loyal to the Constitution, to democracy, or to the republic. But we do claim for all our brethren in the profession, and for the citizenry at large, the right to information which is the bulwark of all our liberties. It is for those liberties, first and foremost, and not for something as shadowy and ill-defined as "national security," that all officials, from the President down to the humblest private or corporal, ultimately serve. The media are ultimately responsible not to the state, which may impose or attempt to regulate standards of conduct. The media, like government officials, are responsible to the public. It is the public that must ultimately judge the fitness of officials, the trustworthiness of members of media and even the continued validity and existence of the state.

The military is committing a big mistake when it doesn't recognize that the strongest weapon in the fight against terrorism is information that is free, unlimited, uncontrolled.



DENR has contradictory functions

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

THE FEW filthy rich loggers have won over the rest of the Filipino nation who want to save the remaining forests in the Philippines. Environment Secretary Michael Defensor has lifted the total log ban imposed by President Macapagal-Arroyo last Dec. 8 after the floods and landslides that wiped off the face of the earth villages in Quezon, Aurora and Nueva Ecija and killed hundreds of people and rendered tens of thousands more homeless. The disasters were caused by rampant logging on the mountains, as did the flood that also buried Ormoc earlier. But the dead have been buried and the disasters are no longer on the front pages, so it is now safe for Defensor to allow logging again, with nary a whimper from the President who had imposed the total ban.

Besides, Defensor has no choice. The loggers and wood producers have been waging a campaign for the resumption of logging, and among their most ardent defenders and boosters is Surigao Rep. Prospero Pichay.

Who is Pichay? Why, he is the chair of the Commission on Appointments. And Defensor has not yet been confirmed by the CA. In fact, the two of them went together to the Caraga Region in Mindanao to lift the suspension of logging there and in Regions 9 (Davao provinces) and Region 11 (Zamboanga Peninsula). Some of the country's biggest loggers are in Surigao, Pichay's home province.

Defensor said he chose to allow logging in the three regions because "they enjoyed constant rainfall, which helps in the natural growth of forests." That is the environment secretary speaking. But any student will tell him that there is plenty of rainfall in tropical rainforests precisely because the forests are there. The trees give off plenty of oxygen which rise to the sky and form the clouds that condense into rain. Cut the trees and the rains will stop. So when logging is allowed in the three regions, there won't be "constant rainfall to help in the natural growth of forests." That is why denuded areas become semi-deserts. That is basic science.

There's another thing Defensor should know. In a photograph accompanying Monday's story on the lifting of the log ban, Defensor and reforestation czar Victor Corpus were shown loading seeds on a dispenser fitted on a Philippine Air Force helicopter in preparation for aerial seeding at the Angat watershed. What's wrong with that?

Well, it's the beginning of summer, which means this is the wrong time for seeding. The right time would be in late May, just before the rainy season. Every student also knows that, and therefore the environment secretary and reforestation czar also should. The rains will water the seeds and make them grow so that when the next dry season comes around, they will be big enough to withstand the heat and lack of water. Plant the seeds or seedling in summer and you only waste time, money and effort.

Defensor and Pichay, by the way, were invited to last Monday's Kapihan sa Manila along with Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri and Blas Tabaranza Jr. of Haribon, precisely to discuss the pros and cons of the log ban, but as I said, the two had to go to Mindanao to lift the log ban. The loggers were more important to them than explaining to the people why the suspension of logging is being lifted. Besides, it is difficult to defend that lifting against environmentalists Zubiri and Haribon.

Zubiri warned that because of the resumption of logging, more disasters would visit the Philippines. "Mark my words," he said, "when the heavy monsoon rains come in June and July, more villages will be devastated. Nature is already punishing us."

Tabaranza said that scientists all over the world consider the Philippines to be "on the verge of environmental collapse." In every international conference on the environment, delegates talk about the Philippines as a "hot spot," with about 190 species of birds on the verge of extinction. "We are in the top five disaster areas in the world," he added.

Tabaranza said Mindanao can no longer afford to lose its remaining forests. We have barely six million hectares of forests remaining all over the Philippines, which is long past the threshold of sustainability. "Regardless of their geographic or regional location, our remaining forests are in critical condition—any further reduction can trigger major catastrophes," he said.

He said that the DENR failed to consider that these three regions "have many disaster prone areas." They also "hold 14 biodiversity areas (and) serve as the last frontiers of the Philippine eagle."

Instead of region-based logging, Haribon proposed:

1. A total ban on commercial logging nationwide.

2. Establishment of tree plantations to supply our domestic wood needs.

2. Vigorous reforestation to rehabilitate degraded watersheds.

3. Pursue a comprehensive land use program to determine possible timber production areas outside of the natural forests.

4. That the DENR stops being a mere regulatory agency and become a developmental one by catalyzing stakeholders, including LGUs, in forest conservation.

I think the original sin was combining "environment" and "natural resources" in one agency. The two have contradictory purposes: one protects the environment while the other exploits natural resources. The DENR has a split personality, a Jekyll-and-Hyde personality. Like the United States, we should have an Environment Protection Agency under the Office of the President whose main duty is to protect and preserve the environment.

Resurrection

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

ON WEEKENDS particularly, the place now looks not unlike Venice Beach in Sta. Monica, California, or closer to home, Boracay. Shops selling souvenirs abound, musicians and mime artists perform in various corners to the delight of onlookers. That is the strip on Roxas Boulevard, from near the US Embassy to well past Aristocrat going in the direction of the CCP. I've been there several times the past year or so, and been astonished by the sea-change that has taken place.

Unfortunately, not literally. The sea hasn't changed, it's as grimy as ever, from the fuel leaking out from the ships docked in the harbor. Though at night, it doesn't look so bad, particularly when the moon is out and a strong breeze whips through the "Bay Area," the lights blinking on the horizon gleaming on the surface of the undulating water. Last Christmas particularly, when the weather dipped crazily and city residents got to dust off their Baguio attire, it was good to be there. You didn't need to drive off to the mountains or sail to the sea to get a respite. You just had to brave the a traffic.

On a good night (at least for business), cars line up the side of the street near the bay as far as the eye can see. Not infrequently, you'll find two rows of cars parked side by side. The street near Aristocrat going to Adriatico Circle looks like Woodstock as well. I don't know which caused the spillover crowd, the Bay Area or Adriatico, the latter being the older kid on the block. But whichever the case, the place, to use a phrase favored by the kids, now rocks.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza I've associated over the last few years with the plan to demolish Mehan Gardens in Arroceros and replace it with a high school. Or so his blueprint indicated—many environmentalists, who protested the idea violently, suspected the real replacement would be a commercial complex, the high school being just a small part of it. I don't know what has happened to his plan—I still see greenery in the area. I would most certainly urge Atienza to stop and rethink it. But that said, I've got to say he has done some pretty neat things for Nick Joaquin's favorite city.

What he has wrought in the Bay Area is quite impressive. The place looked like a mugger's paradise in the past, even with the street lamps throwing a bright orange light on the walkways at night. You never knew if the joggers there were out to improve their health or their fortunes. While at this, I love the T-shirt my son bought a couple of years ago, that says, "Quiapo Jogging Society," showing a physically fit snatcher being chased by a pot-bellied cop. But that's another story.

As I was saying, you've got to like the transformation of the place to what it is now. The place must be doing brisk business. You get to hear all sorts of things, about how much cut Atienza and Co. are raking from this, but this is one of those cases where I personally don't mind that they do. In these times of radically diminished expectations, you get to be positively grateful for corruption that at least leaves something tangible in its wake. Elsewhere in this country, all it leaves is a bad taste in the mouth.

But it's not just the transformation of the Bay Area you've got to be impressed with. It's the transformation of the city itself. The physical side of it isn't bad as it is. I like what the city government has done to Rizal Avenue, near the intersection of Claro M. Recto. That place holds a great deal of nostalgia for me. I frequented it when I was in college in the late 1960s and early 1970s. That was where the bookstores—National, Alemar's, Goodwill, etc.—and movie houses were. That became a dark and forlorn place after the LRT was built, most of the grand places there turning seedy and dilapidated from lack of patronage and from neglect. The area in front of National Bookstore has now been reclaimed from smog and traffic, paved with red brick, and turned over to pedestrians. The result is by no means pedestrian, though I've seen the place only in daytime when I've sought out the bargains in National.

More than physical, you feel a sense of something moribund being revived. Manila seemed near to dying for a long time. During Alfredo Lim's time, you associated it with dead bodies floating in the Pasig River, carrying tags that proclaimed their former occupants to be drug pushers and warning others not to copy their example.

Quiapo was no-man's land, particularly the Muslim part of it, which saw much bloodletting between cops and criminals, and it wasn't always clear who was who. Today, you'll find Pajeros parked there, and respectably attired men and women busily going through the shops. Well, that isn't Atienza's doing entirely. It's the doing of Bong Revilla's and Edu Manzano's favorite scourge, the pirated DVD. But truly this country reeks of epic irony, or magic realism. That a community known for conservative beliefs should be uplifted by a product Allah might not always approve of, it's something only whimsical Fate could have thought of.

Now if only Atienza would listen to the environment groups and keep Mehan Gardens intact, he might yet go down, or up, as one of the best mayors Manila had. Along with Arsenio Lacson, who gave it pride, and Antonio "Yeba" Villegas, who gave it soul. Prosperity isn't just material gain. Berlin is one of the greatest cities in the world, and the most impressive thing about it is not the grand monuments and huge buildings and various testaments to commerce that dot it. It is the greenery that does. One-fourth of the entire place is parks and wildlife, veritable pockets of forest in a bustling city.

Something for him to think about in this season of Lent, in this season of resurrections.

An agent of environmental destruction

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources on Monday lived up to its notorious reputation as an agent facilitating environmental destruction by lifting the suspension of commercial logging in the heartland of the country's remaining and narrowly shrunk forest cover: Region 11 and Caraga, both in Mindanao.

Environment Secretary Michael Defensor issued a memorandum allowing the resumption of logging in Mindanao's timberland belt following a visit to Butuan City, where President Macapagal-Arroyo announced the lifting of the total logging ban in Mindanao.

The President said she authorized logging in the two regions "because thousands of poor families are suffering in areas where alternate means of livelihood are not yet available." The ban was lifted apparently in response to the pressure of the Philippine furniture industry which claimed that the ban endangered the jobs of 1.8 million workers in the industry. The interest group, Philippine Wood Industries Inc., hailed the lifting of the ban, saying it is "very good news for Mindanao, for the workers."

But having already been given a big bite, it clamored for more—the whole leg and arm. Saying the three-month ban has caused dislocation in the wood industry, its spokesperson expressed hope that the President would "lift the same in all areas," which means in the 14 other regions whose forests have been nearly totally depleted.

What was good news for the wood industries was bad news for the environmentalists, such as Greenpeace and Haribon. Greenpeace said selective logging was "business as usual," with logging now "more focused on (remaining) pockets of forests in the regions." Haribon said that "whatever we have left, just leave it alone."

The ban was lifted just three months after the disastrous floods and landslides last December in the provinces of Aurora, Quezon and Nueva Ecija, which killed hundreds of people. The disaster was blamed on logging in the Sierra Madre mountain range.

Caraga is made up of Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Sur and Surigao del Norte, and Region 11 of Davao Oriental, Compostela Valley, Davao del Sur and Davao del Norte. The two regions are home to the economically powerful logging tycoons who have built political dynasties based on logging concessions, which for generations since the 1950s, prospered on timber exports, one of the top 10 export earners of the country in a period of heavy depletion of natural resources.

With the resumption of logging in the two regions, the administration finds itself in a difficult position to justify its decision. There are a number of issues that demand satisfactory explanations.

First, the remaining forest cover of the Philippines is 7.2 million hectares. The DENR deludes itself with the statistical data that the Philippines has a potential for reforestation of around five million hectares. The rate of replanting, under a forest management program, is ridiculously low. Only 400,000 hectares have been reforested under this program, whose success depends entirely on private forest concession holders' initiatives. The record of government forest replanting initiatives is something to be ashamed of.

Haribon argues that a 45 percent forest cover is needed to achieve ecological balance and that no less than a total log ban can save the remaining 20 percent forest cover.

Second, Defensor has a narrow view of forest resource utilization and is biased in favor of logging interests. He tried to assure critics that the government would not expand the lifting of the log ban to other regions. "They have our assurance," he said. "This will be limited to only three regions but those that can compensate the wood requirement." He is also considering resumption of logging in a third region, probably Region 9 (Zamboanga) or the Cordillera Autonomous Region.

The assurance leaves no room for comfort. According to Defensor, log production in Regions 9 and 11 would meet the wood industry's requirement of three million cubic meters a year. Considering the industry's appetite for wood and giving allowance for growth in the industry's output, its wood requirement is unlikely to remain static.

Third, Defensor invokes a weak argument for the lifting of the ban. He said the government cannot maintain the total log ban because the law allows selective logging in the country. The total ban was imposed in December, with the argument that it was in response to a natural disaster. The government can always find a good reason for sustaining the ban on grounds of long-term national interests. The issue is not want of a good reason but want of political will.

The imposition of the total ban last December was partly a public relations gesture, to make it appear that the administration was sensitive to a human disaster and was heeding public opinion against the consequences of forest depletion. Defensor offers the lame excuse that the government could be sued by interest groups if it maintained the ban. But it has the means to defend itself from such capricious suits. And then he shifts the responsibility to Congress by saying, "If the lawmakers want a total log ban, they must first amend the law."

Fourth, Defensor cites a study by the Asian Development Bank indicating that the country needs only 1.5 million to 2.3 million hectares of forest for its wood requirements. The brunt of this demand falls on the three regions forming the county's last forest frontier. The emphasis of policy is to shrink the forest reserves further. Scarcely anything is mentioned about leaning on concessioners to replant their areas, under the so-called "sustainable forest management" scheme.

Home-building by poor people

COMMENTARY

Anna Marie A. Karaos
Institute on Church and Social Issues

IN THE DUMPSITE community of Payatas in Quezon City where many women and children normally spent their day picking waste materials from the mountain of garbage nearby, an unlikely sight is frequently seen these days. Scavenger children, infant-carrying mothers and old people walk around with passbooks and pen in hand, collecting savings from their neighbors. Knowing that the average monthly income of these families is less than P4,000, it is hard to believe that they can save enough to buy a lot and house some day. But this is exactly what they are doing.

In many large cities, mostly in poor or developing countries, slum dwellers easily make up a fourth or even half of the population. Ordinarily, when the shantytowns are a visible part of the urban landscape, they convey images of poverty, squalor and want. But hidden beneath these images is the enormous amount of energy permeating these settlements that has been channeled to constructive endeavors. Not the least of these are house building and community upgrading.

In Bombay as far back as in the 1980s, the inhabitants of Dharavi, the biggest slum settlement in Asia, organized themselves and were able to install water taps in the community where previously only 1 out of every 10 households had water connection. In Sao Paolo, poor families living in the *cortizos* (inner city slums) mobilized to get the government to allow them to acquire, improve and occupy abandoned buildings in the central areas of the city. In South Africa, a federation of slum dwellers' associations has built over 10,000 houses for its members in various cities across the country. In the Philippines, a savings program started in Payatas has spread to cities in Bicol, Iloilo, Davao, Cebu and South Cotabato, enabling poor families to buy the land on which they live.

These and other inspiring stories of poor people's efforts and achievements in improving their lives are wonderfully told and compiled in a book written by 1994 Magsaysay awardee Fr. Eduardo Jorge Anzorena, S.J. Recently launched by the Foundation for the Development of the Urban Poor (FDUP) and the Institute on Church and Social Issues (ICSI), "Housing the Poor in the New Millennium" is a tribute to the creativity, faith and hard work of the poor in devising solutions to the problem of widespread homelessness.

Organized in 10 chapters, with each chapter presenting a particular approach to housing by poor people, the book is refreshing as it is instructive. There is a chapter on community organizing for negotiation and advocacy, one on organizing through savings and credit, another on government-assisted home financing programs, also on housing construction for low-income to very poor families, rural housing and even heritage conservation. Those who are knowledgeable about or involved in the business of low-cost housing, will still find in it ways of housing the poor they have not heard of before and ever stronger confirmation that a better future for them is possible.

From his many travels across the globe purposely seeking out the poor in every city he visits, Father Anzorena shares with his reader innovative practices and valuable insights on what works and doesn't work in very straightforward accounts of home-building efforts by and with the poor. But aside from surveying the different approaches, he has also laid out the roles of different stakeholders in carrying them out.

Government financing played an important role in the success of Thailand's Community Organization Development Institute, which has been providing loans for land acquisition, housing and livelihood activities to informal settlers since 1992. In India, the non-government organization Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centers catalyzed the empowerment and mobilization of women pavement dwellers in Mumbai. The women subsequently formed their own organization, Mahila Milan, which has been organizing and training women and communities in savings and credit, fund management, land acquisition and house construction. In the Philippines, private developers specializing in low-cost housing, like Freedom to Build and the Cebu-based Pagtambayayong Foundation, have been building affordable houses for low-income families, and in the case of the Pagtambayayong Foundation, using alternative building materials.

International development agencies have a role as well. The German Catholic Foundation, Misereor, a long-time supporter of low-cost housing in the Philippines, was instrumental in the formation of Slum Dwellers International, an international alliance of poor people's movements, and in the implementation of learning and exchange programs like the Fedevivienda program based in Bogota, Colombia, aimed at facilitating technology transfer across cities. In the Philippines, Misereor has contributed capital for a revolving fund managed by NGOs for lending to poor communities for housing and land acquisition.

Because of the magnitude of the problem of poverty and homelessness, we are reminded that every bit of help is welcome and can be an opportunity to learn something new. Moreover, the different approaches need and complement each other. Father Anzorena writes: "It is very important for us to realize that each positive action is a very important stone in the construction of a more just society of our dreams. It is also equally important for us to realize that our action, however important it may look to each of us, is merely a stone of the many stones required."

(Interested readers may contact FDUP at 439-3155 or ICSI at 426-5953 for a copy of "Housing the Poor in the New Millennium.")

Pigafetta on the coconut

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

OUR Christmas tree burned down last Rizal Day. The burning tree was dumped into the swimming pool and everyone was grateful that the fire was detected before it blazed like the one in Speaker Jose de Venecia's home.

That tree had seen many gifts under it over the years. One year, the fad was candles; another year, home-made scented soaps. Last Christmas, the gift of choice was virgin coconut oil.

It seems from remembrances of Christmases past that the days of the fruitcake (British friends refer to it as the "Christmas cake") are numbered. It is truly a joy to see this one staple of Christmas slowly growing extinct. The fruitcake used to be the refuge of the unimaginative. What do you give someone who has everything? A fruitcake. What is the safest gift for a person you hardly know? A fruitcake.

There was a time when we received one too many fruitcakes and so they were immediately recycled. Since these came nicely wrapped, all that was needed was to change the card. Soon the rumor went around that there were only a handful of fruitcakes in existence and that they just kept making the rounds, unopened and uneaten, every Christmas.

I have a secret source of cakes in Makati produced by a lady who imagines herself as the super-heroine Wonder Woman, but for me she is best described as a genie out of a bottle. Her cakes and desserts are the best in town.

It's almost Holy Week and I still have bottles of virgin coconut oil that I cannot recycle anymore. This is supposed to be healthy and should be taken in gulps daily. We tried coconut oil on salads, used it to fry food, used it on our hair as my mother used to, and soon I will try using coconut oil for my weekly massage at the risk of smelling like *bibingka*.

Coconuts and coconut oil have been with us a long time. The earliest detailed reference to them can be found in Antonio Pigafetta's account of the voyage of Ferdinand Magellan.

In March 1521, after escaping the thieves in the place they christened Ladrones Island, they sailed toward Samar and anchored on an island south of Samar called Suluan. Magellan ordered tents set up by the beach. While they were resting there and fetching fresh water, a boat with nine men on board arrived. Magellan offered food and drink to the men who were ornately dressed and later presented some fabulous (to him) gifts to what they presumed were heathen primitive natives. The gifts consisted of red caps, mirrors, combs, bells and other trinkets. In return, the men gave Magellan fish, a jar (earthenware or perhaps even Oriental ceramic vessel) with palm wine they called *vraca*, and bananas which Pigafetta, who was seeing them for the first time, described as "figs more than a foot long." They were also given smaller better-tasting bananas and two coconuts.

Due to the language barrier, the men spoke in sign language and made it understood that they would return in four days with rice, other types of food, and, again, coconuts. So Pigafetta describes the coconut and its uses in great detail:

"...Just as we have bread, wine, oil and vinegar in their several kinds, these people have the aforesaid things which come only from the palm [coconut] trees. Wine is obtained from these in the following manner. They make an aperture into the heart of the tree at its top which is called palmito, from which is distilled along the tree a liquor like white must, which is sweet with a touch of greenness. Then they take canes as thick as a man's leg, by which they draw off this liquor, fastening them to the tree from the evening until next morning, and from morning to the evening so that the said liquor comes little by little.

"This tree bears a fruit named cocho [coconut], which is as large as the head, and its first husk is green and two fingers thick, in which are found certain fibers of which those people make the ropes by which they bind their boats. Under this husk is another, very hard and thicker than that of a nut. The second husk they burn and make of it a powder that is useful to them. And under said husk there is a white marrow of a finger's thickness, which they eat fresh with meat and fish, as we do bread, and it has the flavor of an almond, and if it were dried it would make bread.

"From the center of this marrow there flows a water which is clear and sweet and very refreshing, and when it stands and settles it congeals and becomes like an apple. And when they wish to make oil, they take this fruit called cocho and put it in the sun and let said marrow putrefy and ferment in the water, then they boil it, and it becomes oil like butter.

"When they wish to make vinegar, they let the water of the said cocho ferment and put it in the sun, which turns it into vinegar like white wine. From the said fruit milk can also be made, as we proved by experience. For we scraped the marrow, then mixed it with its own water, [squeezed] and being passed through a cloth it became like goat's milk. This kind of palm is like the palm tree that bears dates, but not so knotty. And two of these trees will sustain a family of ten persons."

Reading Pigafetta's 1521 narrative and knowing all the coconut products and by-products we have today, the coconut can really be called a "tree of life."

After virgin coconut oil, what next?

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Katipuneras and other heroines

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I WAS going through a textbook used for a Grade I Sibika at Kultura (Civics and Culture) course and found, on a page discussing national heroes, drawings of Apolinario Mabini, Andres Bonifacio, Jose Rizal and an elderly woman, presumably Tandang Sora. That's three heroes and one heroine. No wonder we tend to associate the word "*bayani*" (hero) with men.

It's not just the textbooks that seem to have forgotten our heroines. Just look at the names of our schools, hospitals, streets, cities and towns, and we again see how men (including quite a few scoundrels) tend to be commemorated more often than women.

I realized I didn't know too many of our heroines either, so I did some research and was pleasantly surprised to find that there was enough material to help me write several columns. (MSC Communications Technologies' "Centennial" site on the Internet was particularly useful for information on women and the Katipunan.)

Rising from their knees

For this year's women's month commemorations, I picked out a few heroines who stand out. Today I'll focus on heroines from the war against Spain and the United States. (On Friday, I'll write about more recent times, through the American and Japanese occupation, into the dark days of the Marcos dictatorship.) I also thought I'd give more space to the less known heroines. I'm not going to use subheadings today and will instead do a chronological listing of some of these important *bayani*.

I'd like to start off with the Women of Malolos, the 20 Chinese *mestiza* women who dared, in 1888, to petition Spanish Governor-General Weyler for permission to open a night school so they could study Spanish, something unthinkable at that time. Their parish priest objected so the governor-general turned down their petition, but the women persisted and finally got their way. For more information about these gutsy Bulakeñas, get Nick Tiongson's "Women of Malolos," published by the Ateneo de Manila University press.

Jose Rizal heard about these young audacious women and wrote, in 1889, a letter "To the Young Women of Malolos." Rizal's piece has many passages that are worth revisiting. One should set the tone for our discussion of Filipina heroines: "You know that the will of God is different from that of the priest; that religiousness does not consist of long periods spent on your knees, nor in endless prayers, big rosarios, and grimy scapularies, but in a spotless conduct, firm intention and upright judgment."

Katipuneras

We move on to the rebellion against Spain. We forget that there were many other women who helped the Katipunan and got involved in all kinds of subversive activities from gun-running to bearing arms themselves, with some of them even reaching the rank of general. Few people know, for example, of Trinidad Teczon, who led a raid on a courthouse in Kalookan to seize firearms for the rebels.

Not all of the heroism consisted of fighting in battlefields. Many women converted their homes into safe havens for rebels on the run. Some wealthy Filipinas also converted their homes into hospitals for the sick and the wounded.

Tandang Sora is perhaps the best known woman-rebel, with one of Quezon City's main thoroughfares now named after her. Yet, many Filipinos would be hard pressed to remember her real name: Melchora Aquino. Although already in her 80s when Filipinos rose against Spain, she helped the rebels for which she was eventually arrested and exiled to Guam. She returned to the Philippines in 1903 and lived to the ripe old age of 107. (Patriotism doesn't always mean martyrdom. Many of the Katipuneras seemed to have lived to ripe old ages, although I suspect there were also many unsung heroines, unsung because they died during the Revolution or during the Filipino-American War.)

We know all too little about Rosa Sevilla, one of two women staffers of La Independencia, the newspaper of the Philippine revolutionary movement. She later founded Instituto de Mujeres, the first Filipino school to offer all levels of education up to college.

Then there was Patrocinia Gamboa of Jaro, Iloilo, mainly remembered for smuggling a flag to be used for the inauguration of a revolutionary government. She was literally wearing the flag, which would have been uncovered at a Spanish checkpoint if she hadn't thought of a ploy. When they reached the checkpoint, she staged a fight with her escort, a young rebel lieutenant, taking on the role of a spiteful wife, "pinching, biting and boxing" according to one account. Distracted and amused, the Spanish soldiers let them through.

Fighting the Kano

Because the Americans took over the Philippines from Spain, there's an overlap between the heroines of the Katipunan and that of the Filipino-American War, as rebels continued their struggle against two colonizing powers. An example was Agueda Kabagan, who fought alongside Generals Miguel Malvar and Artemio Ricarte against Spain but refused to give up when the Americans invaded.

We also have Teresa Magbanua, the first woman general in the Visayas. She is described as an excellent horserider and a sharpshooter and led troops in the Battle of Barrio Yoting in Capiz. She also joined the resistance against the Americans. It's curious how one article about Magbanua described her as a "tomboy" who climbed trees and rode horses. This is the type of biographical detail that needs to be picked up. Our heroines had childhoods, too, and probably had rather turbulent lives in their youth, not quite fitting into prescribed social molds.

The history books are largely silent about women resisting the Americans, but some do mention Clemencia Lopez of Batangas, who waged war by entering the belly of the whale. In 1902, following the arrest of her three brothers in the Philippines, she went to the United States to appeal for their release. There she began to speak and write about the brutality of the US "counterinsurgency" campaign in the Philippines and the Filipinos' quest for independence, her eloquence belying claims that the Filipinos were "savages" that needed to be civilized.

One of her speeches, "Women of the Philippines," delivered to the New England Woman Suffrage Association on May 29, 1902, is a gem. She describe how political our women could be and explained why liberty meant as much to Filipinos as it did to Americans.

Lopez's speech is part of a collection of audio recordings, "Twenty Speeches that Moved a Nation," produced by Platypus. Lopez's piece is read out by Tessie Tomas. Do note that of the 20 speeches in the anthology, Lopez's is the only one written by a Filipina.

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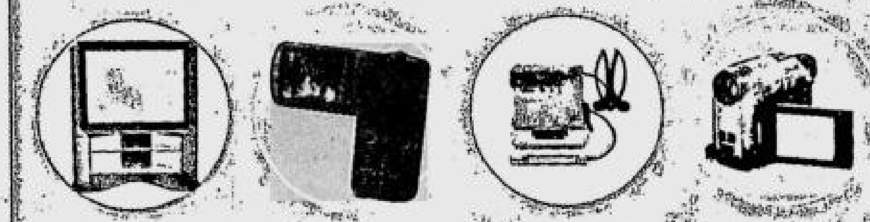

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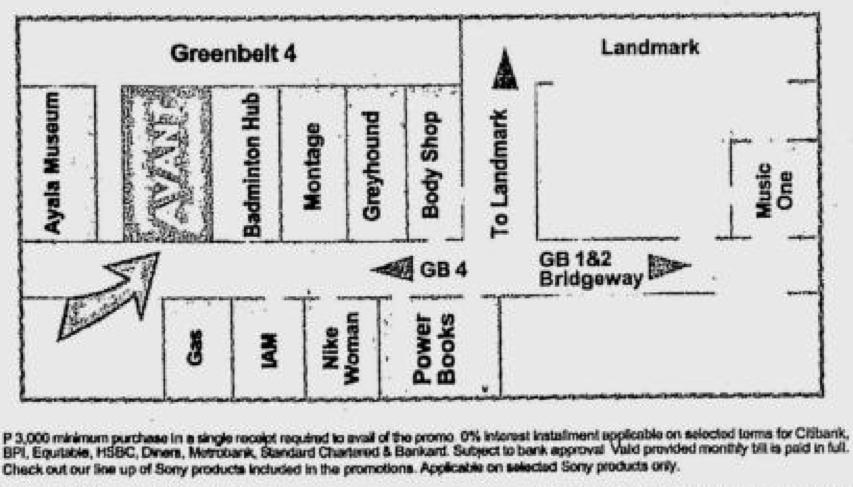

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'Politicians as a joke'

THE SENATE approval of the 2005 national budget generated the following headlines:

1. Abolish Senate!
2. Abolish House of Representatives!
3. Solons call for end to word war between two chambers
4. Let senators and congressmen commit hara-kiri

The following definition seems to speak of the current state of our politics:

1. Congress—A place where elected politicians are brought together to slow down the government.
2. Congressman/Senator—Somebody who says nothing or gets up to speak while nobody listens, after which everybody disagrees.
3. Party caucus—It is a meeting of party members who individually do nothing, but who collectively agree that nothing can be done.
4. Congressional committee—A group that keeps minutes and wastes hours.
5. Committee hearing—It's a session done for media mileage and in aid of reelection.

In addition, we find the following quotations quite relevant:

"Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong remedies."—Groucho Marx

"Politics, noun. A strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles. The conduct of public affairs for private advantage."—Ambrose Bierce, The Devil's Dictionary

"Everything is changing. People are taking their comedians seriously and the politicians as a joke."—Will Rogers.

—JOE SEGUERRA,
Calauag, Quezon,
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Who's gullible or meddlesome?

I WISH to take issue with the acidic remarks of Honesto General (PDI, 1/17/05) regarding those "meddlesome priests and gullible nuns" opposing the entry of foreigners into our mining industry.

1. "In His infinite wisdom, God blessed the Philippines with enormous mineral resources. After centuries of mining, the wealth still under our feet is worth as much as US$1 trillion. He created this mineral wealth for the good of the entire Filipino people, if not the world." If this were so, why are foreigners invited to invest here and not Filipinos first? Why do we need foreign capital in order to tap these resources? Don't we have Filipinos who have enough wealth and capital, and also modern technology?

2. "Of course, the rights of the indigenous peoples should be respected. This is way the law requires that they should give their consent to large-scale mining. If they do, they will get money beyond their wildest dreams." The trouble with General is, he feels money is a substitute for honor, dignity and love of one's birthplace. The indigenous peoples were not consulted when this issue of mining was being discussed in the air-conditioned board rooms of Makati and California. Big businessmen and money-mad government officials planned the whole thing and later forced the indigenous people to yield to their offer. Some calibrated threats were also suggested so that the natives had no other option except to sell out their patrimony. What consent is General talking about?

3. "The most celebrated accident was at the copper mines in Marinduque. Boac River was polluted, it is true, but no life was lost and nobody got sick." How dare General say this. Maybe no human life was lost, but plants and animals and fish were affected, many of them died and the tailings from the river are mute but eloquent testimony to the environmental disaster that issued from this tragedy. Nobody got sick? Did General make a household survey after the incident?

4. "So when some meddlesome priests and gullible nuns protest against large-scale mining, aren't they trying to thwart God's eternal plan for the Philippines?" Since when has General become privy to God's "eternal plan"? Is he a member of the heavenly council that discussed the inscrutable plan of the Almighty? To return the compliment, let me say, General is either meddlesome or gullible, or both.

It is my hope that General should apologize to those meddlesome priests and gullible nuns and be a little more understanding in matters controversial. He could follow Voltaire who said, "I do not agree with what you have to say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

—REV. SALVADOR D. EDUARTE,
associate pastor,
United Church of Christ,
San Nicolas, Pangasinan

Where are the fire trucks?

MARCH is Fire Prevention Month. Fire trucks come to mind. Umbrellas and fire trucks have one thing in common: when you need one, it has to be at hand. In the case of fire trucks, at hand means it must be on site in five minutes of the first call. Later than that would be too late.

To build up the five-minute response capability, Sec. 13 of PD 1185 imposed a fire service tax to be assessed on property and businesses. The tax stood to benefit most those that stood to lose much from a fire accident—the owners of buildings and their insurers.

The tax was intended to be a trust fund, with at least P100 million automatically appropriated yearly, until every home—urban or rural—would be five minutes away from a fire-fighting unit. Two basic units were envisioned: an on-the-spot-first-response unit; and a fire truck with 4-story response capability.

In 1976, simple man-pushed tanks and pumps, mounted on war surplus trailers, were deemed adequate as on-the-spot-first-response units for barangays. These could be assembled for P20,000 and posted in barangay halls in densely populated urban areas and in rural communities. The bigger units with 3-story fire-suppression capability, including hooks attached to winches to pull off grills, were available for P2 million each.

More sophisticated hook-and-sky ladder units, costing from P5 million to P20 million, were considered for high-value urban built-up areas.

The P100-million allocation in the first year could have provided 20,000 barangays with a fire-fighting trailer-pumper each. The succeeding P100-million allocations could have provided 50 fire trucks a year from 1978 to 2005, or 1,350 fire-fighting units by now. A visit to a fire station would show how the code has not been implemented.

To date, neither urban nor rural areas have been given their fire-fighting units. The Department of Budget and Management, the Department of Interior and Local Government, and Congress should get their act together and start building up our fire-fighting resource capabilities to save more lives and property.

—LUIS Q.U. URANZA JR.,
Suite 309 Delta Bldg.,
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China should not pass 'anti-separation' bill

ON DEC. 29, 2004, the 13th Session of China's National People's Congress (NPC) drafted an "anti-separation bill." As its name suggests, the bill— should it be enacted into law—aims to declare the current status quo in the Taiwan Strait as "unified" and "not separate" and, later, to force the integration of Taiwan into Mainland China. This is tantamount to unilaterally changing the status quo or the present cross-strait political reality of "two separate and equal entities."

Such a law completely ignores the international community's understanding of the situation in the Taiwan Strait. Thus, China not only threatens to seriously damage regional peace and stability; it defies the global community. The maintenance of cross-strait peace and stability is a sincere desire not only of all the people of Taiwan but also of the international community.

Although the anti-separation law will be a domestic law, it will constitute a form of "red terror" for Taiwanese investors, students and tourists, and even for international corporations. It will certainly affect normal exchanges across the Taiwan Strait.

Among the people of Taiwan, the drafting of the anti-separation law has already triggered a rise in antipathy toward the Chinese authorities. An opinion poll, published by Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) on Dec. 24, 2004, showed that nearly 83 percent of the Taiwanese are opposed to the enactment of an anti-separation law. Should it enact the law, China would completely destroy the basis for further exchange and for the resumption of dialogue with Taiwan.

Taiwan's government will continue to promote, through a variety of measures, the establishment of a Framework for Cross-Strait Peace and Stability to govern cross-strait interactions. The goal is to set up a mechanism and framework for negotiations, in accord with the current status quo in the Taiwan Strait. In addition, we urge the international community to use all available channels and its influence to prevent China from taking additional steps prejudicial to regional peace and security.

We also hope that the global community will appreciate our efforts to improve cross-strait relations. Taiwan will not pursue a policy of appeasement toward a potential aggressor or tolerate China's attempts at regional hegemony. Mainland China needs to halt and abandon its plans to enact the anti-separation law to avoid further escalation of cross-strait tension.

—ROBERT T.J. SHIH,
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Disabled athletes' feats

THE COLUMN of Manolo Iñigo regarding government reward for achievers (PDI, 3/4/05) was quite laudable. However, I would like to voice my concern over the total lack of recognition given to our disabled and partially disabled athletes (who have been participating in regional meets the past two years, under the able leadership of former Commissioner Mike Barredo) for their feats and achievements.

The records of the Philippine Sports Commission would show that they garnered awards and medals, which in proportion to the number of athletes sent, will surely put the records of the able-bodied athletes to shame. In Vietnam, they got some 36 medals—gold, silver and bronze, and the delegation consisted of only about 43 athletes.

—BERNARDO R. LAHOZ,
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Workers' appeal to Supreme Court

ON BEHALF OF four workers, we are appealing to the Third Division of the Supreme Court to resolve as soon as possible their case, Asian Terminal Inc. vs Renato Villanueva et al. (GR 143219). Villanueva and his four companions were terminated in 1993 by the firm they were working for.

In 2000, the Court of Appeals reversed the earlier decision of the National Labor Relations Commission and ruled that the four workers should be reinstated to their former position and paid back wages.

It's been five years since, but up to now no decision has been issued by the Third Division. Whenever they would follow up their case, the four workers are merely informed that their case has been placed in the agenda of the justices. But nothing has come out of it.

We hope the justices of the Third Division would soon render their decision. The families of the four workers have suffered tremendously since their illegal termination.

—RAFFY REY HIPOLITO,
policy advocacy officer,
FoodFirst Information & Action
Network-Philippines,
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Sulu war disrupting US projects, says NGO

ZAMBOANGA CITY—"It's water down the drain."

That's how Noel Ruiz, program manager of the US-funded Livelihood Enhancement and Peace Program (LEAP), described the fate of the multi-million dollar projects provided to former Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) rebels in Sulu since 1998.

Ruiz said the success of the projects was stalled by the recent fighting between the military and MNLF gunmen that affected at least nine towns of the province.

LEAP is a component of the Growth for Equity in Mindanao, which is being funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

"The investment that was put into Sulu went to waste because of the (fightings)," Ruiz said.

More than 50,000 people were displaced by the clashes that left about 100 people dead, 34 of them soldiers.

Ruiz said despite the setback suffered by the livelihood programs provided to about 3,500 former MNLF combatants, LEAP "will continue rebuilding" the area.

The problem now is how to consolidate the beneficiaries again.

Ruiz said that based on their assessment, about half of their recipients in Sulu had joined Ustadz Habier Malik.

The military has vowed to hunt down the rebels.

John Dalton, overall GEM program manager, declined to say how much fund had been channeled to livelihood projects for former MNLF combatants in the province.

"I don't want people to start thinking of how much we give, or if their share is small or big, cost is irrelevant, they can achieve the benefits," Dalton said.

Ruiz said in Luuk town alone, one of the towns heavily affected by the clashes, around 500 former combatants availed themselves of LEAP's fishery livelihood. He said they got about P10 million in capital.

In Maimbung and Indanan towns, the cost of completed warehouses and community centers amounted to about P1.3 million.

"Unfortunately, all of these were damaged. But we do not know who should be held liable for the damages. So we will just take it as a lesson and start anew," Ruiz said.

Rasul Rasdi, MNLF deputy secretary general, said the Sulu incident was an isolated one and that the fight of former combatants against poverty should be the main consideration.

He said in this city alone, majority of former rebels prefer to tend to their livelihood projects than wage war.

Ruiz said rehabilitation of damaged projects would soon start.

He said by June, more projects would also be built for the province.

Dalton said these projects include the construction of two road network projects that would connect Indanan, Parang and Jolo towns.

He said new farm to market roads and some school buildings would also be constructed. *Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Iloilo transport strike gains strength on 2nd day

ILOILO CITY—Jeepney drivers in the province of Iloilo stayed off the streets for the second straight day to protest a city ordinance, prohibiting the entry of public jeepneys and buses in the city.

The strike affected around 95 percent of public transport in the province, as more jeepney drivers and operators joined the protest yesterday, said Jun Abellon, coordinator of Pinag-isang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (Piston) in Panay.

But Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas Sr. and Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas belittled the effect of the strike.

"Everything is normal in the city," Treñas told the Inquirer in a telephone interview.

The strike had minimal impact on public transport in the city, as drivers plying the city's major routes did not join the strike.

Around 500 protesters, led by the multisectoral alliance Pumuluyo Kontra PBO (Perimeter Boundary Ordinance), held a rally near Bonifacio Drive in the afternoon after marching from three strike centers in key intersections of the city.

The ordinance, implemented on Feb. 16, prohibits the entry of passenger buses and jeepneys in the city and requires them to park in designated terminals outside the city.

The opponents of the ordinance, however, said it failed to solve the traffic problem in the city and had even increased the fare expense of commuters.

Transport sector leaders in other parts of the country are also planning protest actions to press government to put a stop to continuing increases in oil prices. *Nestor P. Burgos Jr. PDI Visayas Bureau*

ROUNDUP

300 get relief goods

BALIUAG, Bulacan—At least 300 families who lost homes and property in the recent typhoon in this town received food packages and household items during the launching of the emergency relief and rehabilitation project of the International Federation of the Red Cross. Floyd Barnaby, IFRC country representative, and Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, distributed the goods to the families who were hit by Typhoons Winnie and Yoyong last year. Gordon said the IFRC and the PNRC spent P7.6 million to help 5,000 typhoon-affected families in various towns of Bulacan. He said at least 10,000 families in Nueva Ecija also benefited from the project during its launch there on Saturday. ***Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

Grass cutting

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—With bolos in hand, more than 100 farmers in Magalang, Pampanga on Sunday climbed the western side of Mt. Arayat to cut cogon grass to stop the spread of fire in about 50 hectares planted to tamarind and mango trees in Barangay Orchard there. SFO4 Conrado Tolentino, Magalang fire marshal, said the farmers helped contain the fire, which damaged at least three hectares. He said the fire started at Barangay Masambong in Arayat where farmers cleared farm plots by burning. ***Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

Wildlife sanctuary

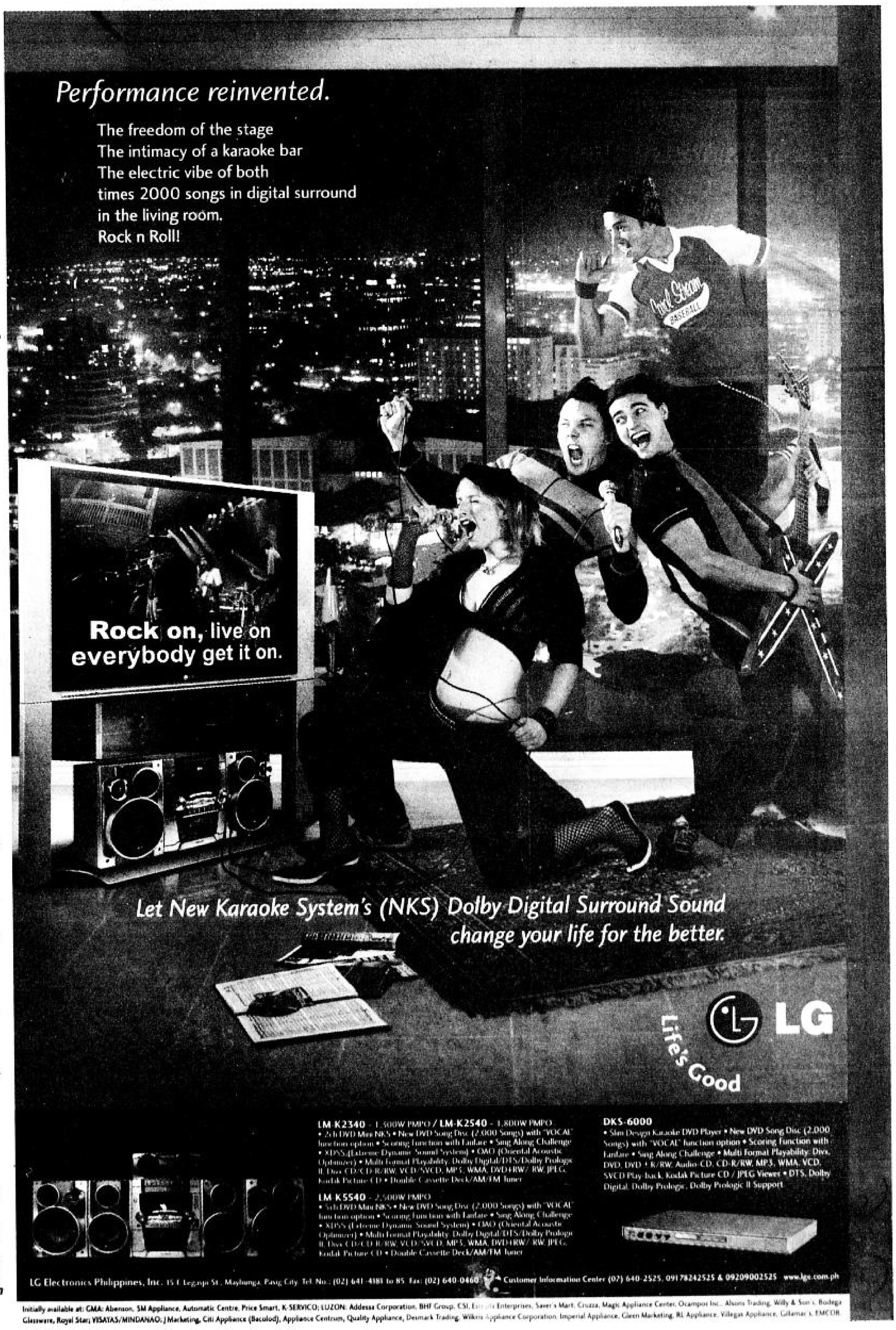
TUGUEGARAO CITY—Environment officials have recommended the declaration of the 40-hectare Malasi Lake at Barangay San Antonio in Cabagan, Isabela, as a wildlife sanctuary. Antonio Principe, regional director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, said the lake is home to six species of wild ducks frequenting the lake yearly by the thousands. He said an initial P4-million fund will be used to reforest the area. ***Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Illegal fishing

CITY OF CALAPAN—Four persons were arrested at about 4 p.m. on Friday for illegal fishing in Barangay Merit, Victoria, Oriental Mindoro by members of the 409th Provincial Police Mobile Group, said Senior Supt. Marcelino Romero, group head. Romero identified the suspects as Ronnie Nagutom, Reynaldo Bugawan, JR Nagutom and Rolly Nagutom. The arresting team confiscated a motor banca, two sets of electric fishing gear and plastic container. Earlier, the same police group confiscated an abandoned banca, batteries, and electric fishing device in the same town. ***Madonna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Solicitations hit

CITY OF CALAPAN—Oriental Mindoro Bishop Warlito Cajandig said the local Church is coming up with a statement, to be read in pulpits, calling on the prohibition of solicitations of gifts from graduates. Cajandig said it was very unfair to students and a heavy financial burden on poor families. The appeal will also be addressed to all parochial schools in all 14 towns and the city, he added. He suggested that a circular be passed by the Department of Education for this purpose. Later, Cajandig said, they will also prohibit parishes from soliciting from politicians. ***Madonna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***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Clash indicates syndicates defy ban on logging

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Illegal loggers in Nueva Ecija and Bulacan who had been stopped by a crackdown since October last year, tried to transport illegally cut logs on Sunday night but were foiled after a clash with the police, reports received by the INQUIRER showed.

Mayor Isidro Pajarillaga of General Tinio in Nueva Ecija said at least 3,000 board feet of hardwood were seized after the 9 p.m. gunfight that ended in Barangay Calyos in Peñaranda town.

Pajarillaga said hired goons of timber poachers figured in the gunfight with 32 policemen from General Tinio, Peñaranda and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and three Department of Environment and Natural Resources forest guards.

No one was reported hurt in the clash.

"*Sinusubok nila kami* (They're challenging us)," Pajarillaga told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

He said the task of protecting the forests in these parts of the Sierra Madre mountain ranges has become "dangerous" for local governments.

Pajarillaga said Sunday's incident was the first attempt by illegal loggers to steal wood. He said illegal logging in his area has been "totally stopped."

The drive began when former Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun rallied provincial and municipal officials and communities to support forest protection work.

Pajarillaga said the local government introduced livelihood projects like seed production and farming. These, he said, need to be sustained to be able to wean the residents from their dependence on financiers of illegal logging.

The perennial "people power," a term for mob rule by residents preventing the confiscation of hot logs, did not happen on Sunday night.

This shows that, finally, people have realized the futility of defending those who actually exploit them, Pajarillaga said.

Farmers using carabaos to haul logs or by manually dragging these to rivers and ponds are paid cheap for their backbreaking labor.

Financiers buy the wood at prices six times lower than how much these are sold in the market.

The Gozun-led campaign, which Secretary Michael Defensor supported, required arming forest guards and foresters, it was learned.

While's Sunday incident was stopped, Regidor de Leon, DENR Central Luzon executive director, said it indicated plans by illegal loggers in the two neighboring provinces to challenge the log ban, which had been in effect since Dec. 8, 2004.

"They are testing the water but we are bound to go strong on the log ban. They should realize we are not lax here," De Leon said.

Town council urges closure of alcohol plant for pollution

MANAOAG, Pangasinan—After six years and four petitions from residents who complained their health was being affected, the municipal council recommended the closure of an alcohol distillery plant in Barangay Baritao here.

In a special session on Feb. 26, the council turned over the resolution to Mayor Napoleon Sales, who said he would implement the closure order.

"I am for the benefit of the people," Sales told the Inquirer.

This came amid a motion for consideration filed by the management and employees of the Alko Distillers Inc. but this was dismissed by the council.

"Even if the plant owners appeal, councilors opposing its operations will not change their decision," said Councilor Raymund Veloria.

Veloria, a doctor, chairs the council's committee on health and sanitation.

Alko officials could not be reached for comment.

A report of the council's committee on health and sanitation said the plant of the Alko Distillers Inc. emitted "microorganisms, chemicals, toxic acid, corrosive agents, fumes and other toxic waste, sulfuric acids, alcohol waste, etc."

The plant's operation had been a subject of complaint from residents since 1999.

A report from the council's committee on public works, infrastructure and land use said the plant had been found to be "detrimental and prejudicial to the health and safety of the residents."

But the local officials then did not act on the complaint, saying that Alko had contributed largely to the revenue of this town.

Veloria said the local government generated around P350,000 a year in revenue from Alko.

The plant, a former sugarcane plantation and factory run by Hinds Sugar Co. in the 1940s, was taken over in 1998 by Alko Distillers.

Alko supplied alcohol to pharmaceutical companies in the country.

About 3,000 residents in Barangays San Ramon, Mermer, Pantal, Nalsian, Liksi, Babasit and Baritao had been complaining about the foul smell from the waste pits of the plant. *Eric Montoya and Nemensio de la Cruz, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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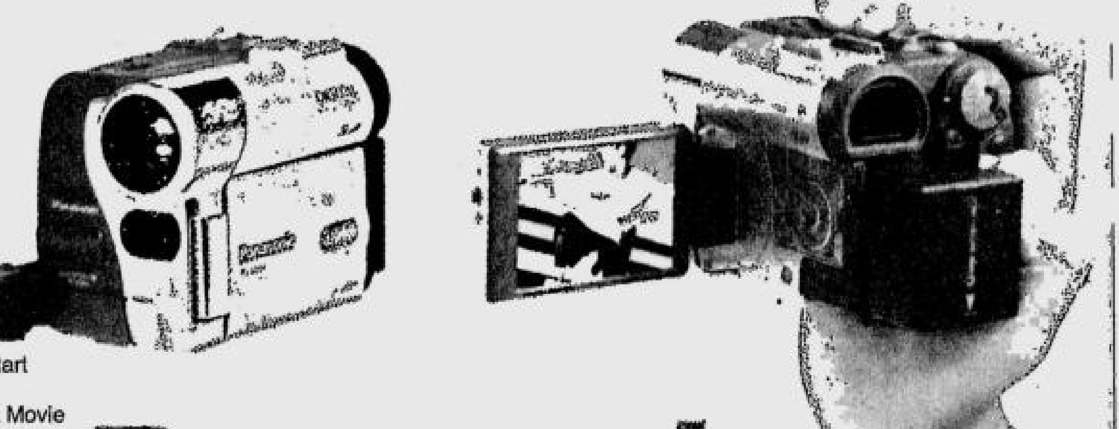

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INQUIRER *Northern Luzon*

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
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Unmasking the ancient Ibalois

By Vincent Cabreza
La Trinidad, Benguet

THE TRUE face of the ancient Ibalois of Benguet became the star attraction of a fair in the province that hoped to revive interest in their roots.

An authentic reconstruction of an Ibaloi woman's face that was based on a 15th-century Kabayan mummy attracted children who grew up with stories about the mysterious mummies of Benguet.

Cheryl Young, an American forensic expert who was hired by the University of Wyoming, molded the life-sized plaster cast copy of the mummy based on measurements drawn out from CT scanning and computer imaging.

Some more detailed reproductions of ancient Igorots and their daily activities were put on display at the Benguet State University in La Trinidad town. The BSU put up an exhibit of the late historian Geoffrey Carantes, who translated all of his research on pre-Hispanic Igorot lifestyles into detailed illustrations.

Carantes' portraits of Ibaloi costumes and rituals and Ifugao couples have a comic book quality to them because of his fascination with the medium. The derivations make his historical collections accessible to the young audience.

"The young [Ibalois] are hungry for information about their ancestors. They grew up only with pictures of mummies or with textbooks written by foreigners. They want to know for themselves what is real about ancient Benguet," said Kenneth Kelcho, a Kabayan government employee, who acted as curator for the Kabayan exhibits in the recent Adivay festival in La Trinidad.

Lost art

The mummy's reproduced bust is popular because Benguet mummification is a lost art, and the young are trying to rediscover the process behind the preservation of their ancestors, Kelcho said.

Benguet's mummies of Benguet came into the national consciousness in the late 1990s when the mummy of Apo Anno was returned to its ancient burial cave in Buguias town. The event has sparked strong reactions from the Ibalois who have asserted their right over all mummies that have become museum or art collection pieces.

"We don't even have anymore mummies in the Kabayan museum," said Kelcho. "We returned all of them [to their caves] to abide by [the Ibalois' wishes] that no one should continue to desecrate our dead."

Most of these mummies were stolen by American and Filipino collectors, and were recovered abroad.

The only mummy still on display in Kabayan belongs to the woman whose face was reconstructed, Kelcho said.

The Americans named the bust "Datu," which offended some residents. "They could have asked us and we could have given them more appropriate Ibaloi names, and not something that was suggested by the Tagalogs," Kelcho said.

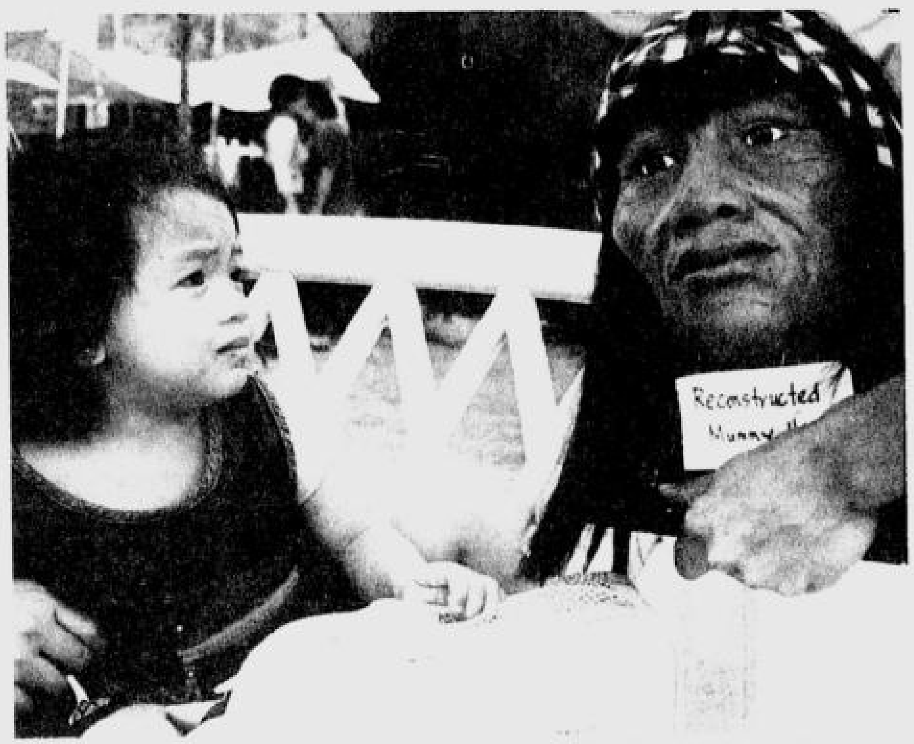
Indian looks

The mummy's features share similarities with the American Indian face, surprising several Ibaloi residents. The face is framed by long, black hair that is fixed tight to the head by a *punjet* (head band). The face is of a middle-aged woman, probably in her 40s, with wide, sparkling eyes, high cheeks and wide, smiling lips.

"Our noses are not [this aquiline]," said Rhoda Joseph, an administration officer of Benguet's engineering office.

Kelcho said anthropological notes describe the Ibalois of that era to have flat noses, high cheek bones and wide jaw bones, although the ancient Ibalois appeared much taller than modern Ibalois.

The Ibalois have an average height of 5 feet 3 inches, but the mummies' features suggest that their ancestors stood as tall as 6 feet.



THE BUST is a faithful forensic reproduction of the features of a Kabayan mummy from Benguet by the University of Wyoming in the United States. VINCENT CABREZA

The Ibalois are the only indigenous Filipino culture with an intricate mummification ritual, which has been traced back to the 13th century.

Mummification

Kelcho said members of the Ibaloi elite were honored with mummification, but the ritual slowly vanished between the 19th and early 20th centuries because of Spanish and American guidelines about community sanitation.

Carbon-dating of three mummies placed one mummy's death at the turn of the 20th century, "but maybe the Ibalois simply hid their mummification rituals from the Americans," he said.

Kabayan youths have tried to reconstruct the mummification methods, but this only earned them the ire of elders.

Carantes confronted the elders who frowned at research activities they considered sacrilegious, prompting him to rely on drawings to reconstitute the world of the ancient Igorots, said his son, Joseph Jude.

Carantes, a fan of comic book artists like Hal Foster and Joe Kubert, rendered in pen and ink the oral descriptions he documented of Ibaloi marriage customs, weaving styles and even carpentry techniques. He was a University of the Philippines fine arts graduate.

Carantes was fascinated by the story of Tonglo, an old Ibaloi community that fought the Spaniards, and which became the common backdrop of many of his sketches.

IN THE KNOW

The mummies

APO Anno

Mummification, locally known as *mek'ing*, is one of the highest forms of love that the Ibaloi people show to their ancestors. The Benguet mummies have been declared a national treasure of the Philippines.

Well-preserved mummies are initially found in the Timbac, Bangao, Tenongchol, Naapay and Opdas caves in Kabayan, Benguet. After their rediscovery in the early 1900s, many mummies have been stolen, including the "smiling mummy" (stolen in the 1970s) which is known for having an intact set of teeth.

The mummy caves have been designated as one of the 100 most endangered sites in the world by Monument Watch, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of important monuments and sites.

The most famous Benguet mummy is Apo Anno, a tribal leader in Benguet who died 500 years ago. Bearing intricate tattoos, the mummy has been returned to its burial cave in Buguias town.

The National Museum is conducting a comprehensive survey and documentation of around 50 caves around Kabayan. At least 28 mummies, most of these deteriorating, have been accounted for.

The National Museum believes that 100 other mummies are found in the more than 200 caves of Benguet.

Sources: http://www.info.com.ph/~xjeffa/tourmumm.html and INQUIRER interviews

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Farmers face eviction from ex-senator's land

By Romy G. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Court of Appeals (CA) has ordered agrarian reform beneficiaries to vacate the 349-hectare property of former senator Rene Espina in Tanjay City, Negros Oriental after it ruled that its coverage under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program was "not valid."

The Special CA 28th Division gave credence to the claim of the Polo Coconut Plantation Company Inc. (PCPCI) that the property should not be placed under CARP because it had originally been exclusively devoted to the raising and pasturing of cattle and for fishponds.

It said the property was later developed as a site for a special economic zone and then reclassified as mixed industrial, commercial and residential land.

"The said land is no longer agricultural but one which is industrial, commercial and residential since the municipal council of the then municipality of Tanjay (now City of Tanjay) reclassified it from agricultural to industrial, commercial and residential land…," the decision said.

The 14-page ruling, dated Feb. 16, was penned by Associate Justice Isaias Dicdican and was received by the Department of Land Reform (DLR) in Negros Oriental on March 2.

Louie L. Naranjo, of the DLR legal division here, said the land reform department and the 144 agrarian reform beneficiaries will file a motion for reconsideration on the decision.

Should the appellate court dismiss the motion, he added, they will bring the matter to the Supreme Court.

Naranjo, however, refused to comment on the decision, saying he might be violating the rule on subjudice.

The farmer-beneficiaries were installed on the property of Espina in Barangay Polo, Tanjay, about 32 km north of here, on Feb. 25, 2004, despite strong opposition from the landowner and after 13 years of waiting on the part of the beneficiaries.

The owners protested the installation because the CA had yet to resolve Espina's petition for injunction to stop the DLR from placing the plantation under CARP.

Espina also said his estate should not be placed under CARP coverage because the area has been declared has been declared an economic zone by the Tanjay City government.

RELIEF FROM HEAT
Residents living in communities along the Cagayan de Oro River find comfort in the river's water as the El Nino dries up farms and raises temperature in the city. GRACE CANTAL ALBASIN/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

People Power Builds Hope

EDSA Day at Gawad Kalinga Baseco

"Summer had just started its blaze as the Philippines observed EDSA Day, our famous tribute to the majesty of People Power. On this day, there was another celebration, another liberation for scores of families that have found the strength to help themselves through Gawad Kalinga. And no less than former President Corazon Aquino together with business leaders were present to witness the event.

"People power is Gawad Kalinga and Gawad Kalinga is people power," said former President Cory who also reiterated her support for GK by committing to get more groups involved with the program.

"What began as a noble grant to Gawad Kalinga has become an integral part of our corporate vision," said Boy Martirez, Head of PCMSD for Smart Communications. "It is now the clarion for our efforts at good corporate citizenship."

EDSA Day for the residents of Gawad Kalinga at Baseco Compound in Tondo was in full celebration as Mr. Martirez also unveiled to start similar SMART Amazing Villages in the Visayas and Mindanao.

The SMART Amazing Village at the Baseco Compound is a model for community development on all levels.

Aside from partnering with beneficiary families in building their homes, SMART has also provided Medical/Dental missions as well as a sustainable livelihood programs through Tn'T Tawag n' Text Partner.

On this day the smell of hotdogs and the sound of children's laughter swirled about the huge soundstage mounted at Baseco. As the dignitaries and their escorts left, the kids played and ran around the area. At the SMART Amazing Village, with every brick laid, there's always a new reason to smile and celebrate.

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SMART PCMSD Head Boy Martirez [illegible] and Gawad Kalinga Executive Director [illegible]

Fr. Ben Nebres addresses the crowd

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Bishops call for ceasefire with lawmakers

By Christian V. Esguerra

CATHOLIC bishops yesterday called for a ceasefire with lawmakers who had accused the Church of unwittingly abetting abortions by rejecting House Bill No. 3773.

Cebu Archbishop Cardinal Vidal and Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iniguez said that instead of assigning blame, the lawmakers should dialogue, not debate, with Church leaders.

Iniguez said the bishops were open to a dialogue with Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, principal author of HB 3773, and other lawmakers backing it.

Lagman had earlier challenged the bishops to a public debate but was ignored.

"What we are trying to do really is to go to the truth and to act under the mantle of truth," Iniguez said. "We appeal for a stop to all this mudslinging. I think they are unworthy of us."

Vidal said the Church was being blamed simply because lawmakers "cannot understand" its position.

"If only they would listen to us, [they will understand that] what is intrinsically evil we cannot allow," he said.

Vidal said that while the legal aspect of the issue was the province of lawmakers, it was the Church that determined "the immorality and morality of a thing."

"When it comes to the area of morality, that is our concern [and] we cannot debate on that," he said.

Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz assailed Lagman and company for saying that the Church was in effect abetting abortions by consistently criticizing HB 3773.

Lagman and other members of the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development Foundation had claimed that the bill would prevent more than 1,000 abortions arising from unwanted pregnancies daily.

Cruz said that contraception and abortion were "very close siblings," and that "the more contraceptives are used, the more abortions are done."

"There is a direct relevance between the abundance of contraceptives and the frequency of abortions. This is the experience of all countries successful in population control. Logic and statistics prove this fact," he said.

Ignore Church, lawmakers told

From page A1

scrap HB 3773 should the Catholic Church pledge to meet all the needs of street children from food and clothing to education.

On Monday, women members of the House took the floor and denounced the government for its purported failure to protect and uphold women's rights.

They called the chamber an "Old Boys Club" and said it should give more than lip service to the role of women in nation-building.

Atienza's role

Carrying crosses symbolizing their daily suffering and repression, urban poor women belonging to the Kongreso ng Pagkakaisa ng Maralitang Lunsod (KPML), Zone One Tondo Organization (Zoto) and Kasama Ka massed in front of Manila City Hall and assailed Mayor Lito Atienza for his active role in the campaign against HB 3773.

They particularly cited Atienza's Executive Order No. 003 in 2000 discouraging Manila residents from using artificial methods of contraception.

"If Mayor Atienza is truly for the masses and the Church is truly the church of the poor, they should recognize the rights of poor women to decide on their own and have access to reproductive health services," Zoto president Lydia Ela said.

Ela also said that aside from the economic crisis, the government's neglect of women's reproductive health had become yet another burden to poor women.

KPML vice president Lilia Macario said women were also facing other problems, such as the continuous increase in the prices of basic goods, water and electricity.

"The proposed increase in the VAT [value-added tax] rate will add to our heavy load. We have a woman President who is numb and deaf to women's demands for economic relief," Macario said.

One of their own

The protesting women were one in taking a swipe at one of their own.

About 500 women and their children assembled at the Welcome Rotunda in Quezon City to demand the ouster of President Macapagal-Arroyo and to lash out at her administration for the rising prices of goods and the proposed increase in the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent.

Waving purple and red flags, the protesters led by Gabriela-NCR chanted calls for Ms Arroyo's ouster ("*Patalsikin si Gloria*") interspersed with shouts hailing woman power ("*Mabuhay ang kababaihan!*").

In a statement, Gabriela-NCR decried what it called the Filipinos' miserable situation, saying almost 12 million were hungry more than once every three months.

"But instead of responding to Filipinos' growing hunger, [Ms Arroyo's administration] continues to implement measures that only worsen their poverty," Gabriela said, calling for higher wages.

The demonstrators burned an effigy of the President before marching toward Malacañang.

Arrest of 4 women

The same anger was manifested in Davao City, where Gabriela members assailed the President for supposedly being one of the worst violators of women's rights.

Gabriela national chair Luz Ilagan blamed Ms Arroyo for the arrest and detention of four coordinators of the party-list group in Quezon on March 1.

She said the four were then conducting consultations on the ongoing US-RP Balikatan military exercises in that province and finalizing plans for follow-up relief operations in typhoon-stricken areas in Luzon.

Ilagan identified the four as Miralyn Gamba, 24; Nancy Ella, 33; Leonila Manalo, 32, and Arlyn Ramos, 23, who is four months pregnant.

She said the case against the four women—the first the Gabriela provincial coordinator and the other coordinators for the towns of Real, Tayabas and Quezon—was dropped three days later because of procedural lapses and sheer lack of evidence.

Lyda Canson, chair of Gabriela-Davao, also said the proposed increase in the VAT rate would make the lives of women more difficult.

According to Canson, the new tax measures, the oil deregulation law and other policies of Ms Arroyo's administration are making the lives of Filipino women harder. ***Reports from Michael Lim Ubac, Tina G. Santos and DJ Yap in Manila; Germelina Lacorte, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Filipinos among world's earliest risers, says survey

From page A1

vey of sleeping habits.

The survey by consumer and market research firm ACNielsen was conducted in October last year and covered 14,000 consumers in 28 countries spanning Asia, Europe and North America.

Fully 91 percent of Indonesians, who are predominantly Muslim and pray before dawn, said they were out of bed before 7 a.m., while 88 percent of Vietnamese and 69 percent of Filipinos said likewise.

At the opposite end, 69 percent of Taiwanese, 68 percent of South Koreans and 66 percent of Hong Kongers sleep after midnight.

Seven of the top 10 late-sleeping nations in the survey are in the Asia-Pacific region, including Japan, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

Globally, Portugal has the most late sleepers with 75 percent staying up past midnight.

The earliest to bed in the Asia-Pacific region are Australians, 24 percent of whom are in bed by 10 p.m., followed by New Zealanders at 19 percent.

Australians also log the longest sleeping hours with 31 percent catching more than nine hours of slumber per day, followed by 28 percent of Kiwis.

The Japanese are the most sleep-deprived people among the Asians surveyed, with 41 percent getting six hours or less.

Fully one-fourth of the Taiwanese polled do not get up until after 9 a.m., the survey showed. *AFP*

Gov't may allow . . .

From page A1

President to reconsider her decision lifting the log ban in Davao and Caraga.

"I'm saddened by this and wish Malacañang to reconsider it in view of the deaths of people in Aurora and Quezon," said Madrigal, vice chair of the Senate committee on environment, and chair of the committee on cultural communities.

"In my recent visits to Cordillera, they asked me: 'Ma'am, please stop logging because we don't want to be the next Aurora and Quezon.' It's leading there," she said.

Hundreds of people were killed when landslides and flash floods, spawned by a series of typhoons, buried villages in Aurora and Quezon in eastern Luzon last year. The tragedy was blamed on illegal logging in the Sierra Madre mountain range.

Shortly after, the President ordered a total log ban nationwide.

Retrogressive

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., for his part, said the move allowing logging operations in the two regions showed the President's "half-hearted commitment" to save the country's thinning forests.

Pimentel, author of Senate Bill No. 1150, which seeks to impose a 25-year log ban nationwide, also voiced fears that Malacañang's decision to allow logging in Region 11 and Caraga could open the floodgates to the resumption of commercial logging in other regions.

"That is a retrogressive act. This is a skewed policy that will add to the problem of Mindanao. Instead of lifting the logging ban, we should intensify the reforestation of badly denuded areas," he said in a statement.

"We should not wait for landslides and floods to come to make us change our mind," Pimentel said.

Pressure

Like Madrigal, Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri warned that lifting the log ban in two Mindanao regions might result in a repeat of the flash floods that hit Quezon and Aurora last year.

"Let's not turn Mindanao into another disaster area," Zubiri said.

"Unfortunately, my good friend (Defensor) might have been under extreme pressure from political and business groups to allow loggers to operate in certain regions," he said.

Defensor has been named Cabinet officer for regional development (CORD) for Caraga.

Zubiri said Defensor's decision might lead loggers to invade even tropical rainforests, particularly in northeast Mindanao.

Zubiri warned that logging in the Caraga region could lead to the inundation of the Agusan Marsh in La Paz, Agusan del Sur.

"If the trees in the Caraga region were cut wholesale, this could lead to the dumping of water into the Agusan Marsh, turning it into a gargantuan lake," he said.

Zubiri said he was standing pat on his position that government should allow logging in industrial tree plantations but not in tropical rainforests.

He said that government should also tap local nongovernmental organizations and churches to ensure that loggers adhered to logging laws in the two regions where the log ban was lifted.

Good sign

But Rep. Ace Barbers (Lakas, Surigao del Norte) welcomed the DENR's order lifting the log ban in Region 11 and Caraga, saying "As a Caraganon, I think it's a good sign of economic development in the region."

Logging, the second source of wealth and employment in Caraga, is a "regulated" industry because all loggers have permits and licenses to cut trees, according to Barbers.

But he acknowledged that small-time loggers, or poachers, were still operating in the area."

Barbers disclosed that Caraga was the only "remaining timber corridor" in the country with about 33,000 remaining hectares of timber forests brought about because of "industrial planting."

For his part, House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles received with jubilation the announcement of Defensor.

He said lifting the log ban in his province was a "validation of (Davaoeños) forest preservation and reforestation efforts."

He went further by saying that allowing the resumption of logging in Davao was a "a good reward system for those who know how to conserve and protect the forest."

Legal basis

His counterpart in the minority bloc could only sigh in disbelief.

"When (Malacañang) imposed a total log ban, we asked about its legal basis. Now we're asking the same question. The lifting of the ban was without any congressional imprimatur. What's the legal basis of the President in determining who could log or not? Is it based on the area's (forest cover), concessionaire, or on the closeness to the ruling power?" Francis Escudero (NPC, Sorsogon) said.

Nick de Lange, president of the Chamber of Furniture Industries of the Philippines, said furniture makers welcomed Defensor's decision but added that his group would wait to see if there would be enough wood for their industry.

"Only time will tell if the supply of wood (from the two regions) would be enough," De Lange said. ***Reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Vincent Cabreza (PDI Northern Luzon Bureau), Leila B. Salaverria, Michael Lim Ubac and Philip C. Tubeza***

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Women hold global march for equal rights

From page A1

sion no longer exist, and where integrity, diversity and the rights and freedoms of all are respected."

The Montreal-based World March of Women, which authored the document, "views patriarchy as the system oppressing women and capitalism as the system that enables a minority to exploit the vast majority of women and men."

Some of the worst problems experienced by women around the world were highlighted by the World Organization Against Torture in a new report on International Women's Day.

"Gender plays a major role on the type of torture used, the circumstances in which torture is used, the consequences and the availability and access to justice," according to a report of the world's largest coalition of nongovernmental organizations fighting against arbitrary detention, torture, summary and extrajudicial executions.

The antitorture group in particular denounced the fact that women continued to be denied legal protection against the flaunting of national and international rights, with the effect of offering impunity to the transgressors.

The World Organization Against Torture (WOAT) denounced the rape, and other violence against women and girls, perpetrated in Bangladesh, Colombia, Greece, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Sudan.

Rape in war zones

Human Rights Watch also pointed out the incidents of rape in war zones such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, where government troops and rebel fighters raped tens of thousands of women and girls during the conflict in the east of the country.

"Sexual violence has shattered tens of thousands of lives in Congo, but fewer than a dozen victims have seen their assailants prosecuted," said Alison Des Forges of HRW's Africa division.

For its part, the UN food agency said Tuesday it was committed to reducing additional burdens often put on women in developing countries as children had a better chance of growing up well-nourished when women were in control of the food.

"While women's access to food is all important, it is vital that we minimize the impact of the additional burden that this may create," said James Morris, executive director of the World Food Programme.

Practice has shown that ensuring women's control over food often adds to an already heavy burden of responsibility, the agency said.

In the line of fire

Women were also increasingly in the line of fire from the multibillion-dollar. international trade in small arms, according to a report released on Monday by Amnesty International, Oxfam and a third group.

In South Africa, a woman is shot dead by a current or former partner every 18 hours, while in the United States, two out of every three women killed by their husbands are shot, according to the report released on the eve of International Women's Day.

"Women are silent sufferers in the proliferation of small arms. This is the scandal against the human race," said Judy Bassingthwaite, a representative of the South African-based International Action Network on Small Arms that also authored the report titled: "The Impact of Guns on Women's Lives."

In economic terms, while women account for more of the work force, they still trail men when it comes to salaries, according to a report of the French statistics office Insee.

One reason is more women than men hold temporary jobs, or are underemployed—that is, they work part-time though wanting to work more. More women are also unemployed, Insee said.

Germany's Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul said economic development was the key to strengthening women's rights.

"As the Chinese proverb says, 'Women hold up half the sky.' For that reason, they should have half the power," she said in a statement.

In Asia, women trail well behind their male counterparts in terms of socioeconomic advancement although the gap is closing in some countries, according to the inaugural MasterIndex of Women's Advancement measuring the socioeconomic success of women in 13 regional economies.

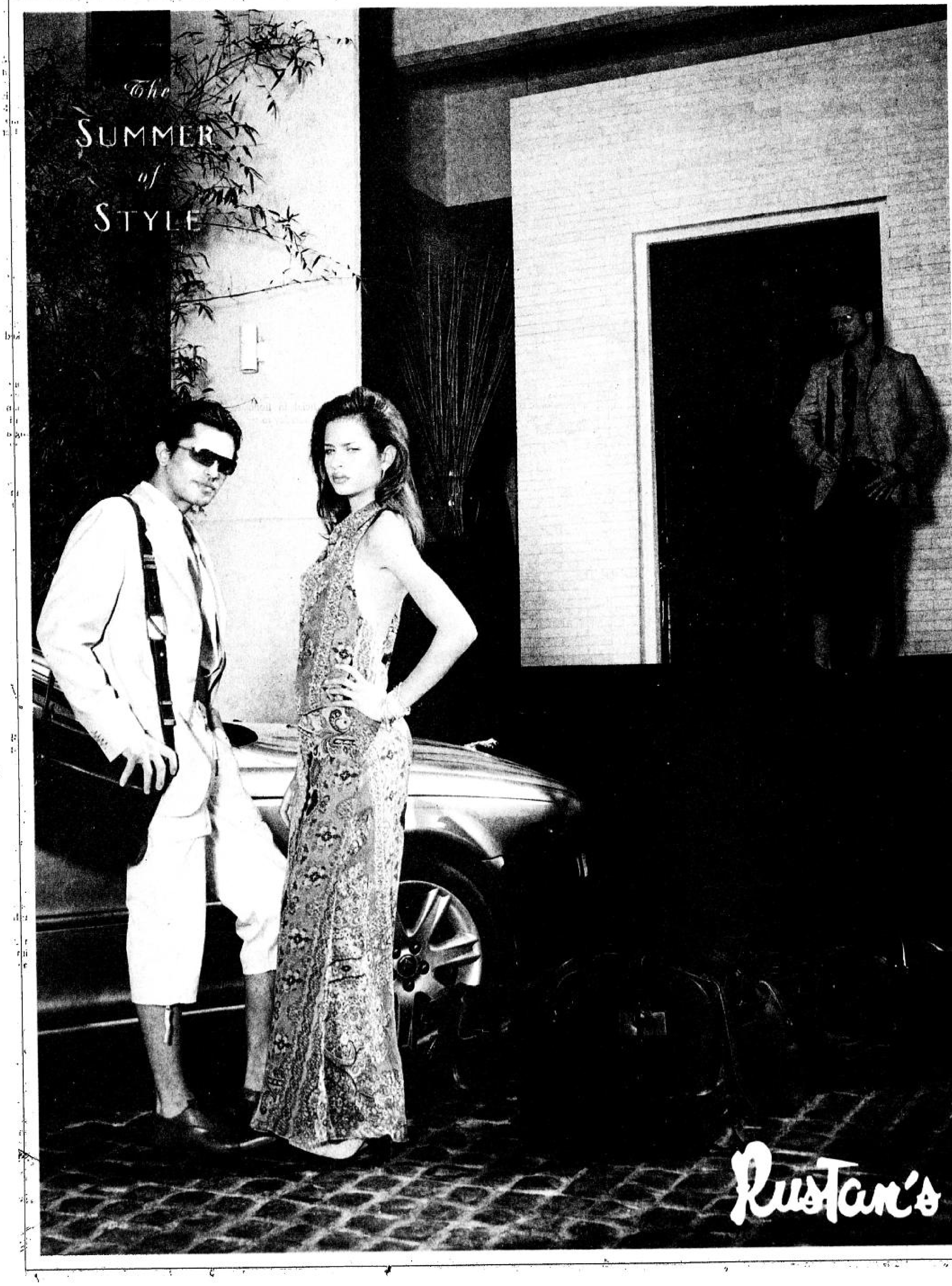
Gap closing

A score below 100 indicated gender inequality in favor of men.

It used four key indicators—labor force, tertiary education, managerial positions and median income. Of the 13 markets surveyed, gender inequality was highest in South Korea with a score of 45.5 followed by Indonesia at 52.5 and Japan at 54.5.

Women in Thailand fared best with scores of 92.3 followed by Malaysia at 86.2, China at 68.4 and Australia at 67.6..

AFP



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Transport groups want one-time, big price increase

By Abigail L. Ho

STOP killing us softly.

That was the appeal of an alliance of public transport groups which is urging oil firms to just implement one, big price hike instead of small but frequent increases.

But the request of the Alliance of Transport Operators and Drivers Associations of the Philippines (Altodap) ran against a Malacañang order that will put a 50-centavo cap on current weekly oil price hikes.

Domestic oil firms have told Malacañang that they would be raising pump prices by an average of P2.50 per liter this month.

Altodap president Boy Vargas said in a briefing yesterday with the Consumer Oil Price Watch that they would rather be shocked by one, big price hike than be surprised by small price increases every week.

Vargas explained it would be easier for them to budget their expenses and plan ahead if they immediatly knew how much oil firms would be adjusting their prices.

"We want to know why they implement small increases every week when they can just hike prices one time by a big amount. It's so difficult to keep guessing all the time," he said.

The Department of Energy earlier appealed to local oil companies to implement staggered price hikes to ease the impact on motorists.

More difficult

But Vargas said the small and frequent oil price hikes were making life more difficult for the public transport sector.

Besides, he added, there is a lack of transparency on the part of the oil firms, which is making it more difficult for the public and private motorists to determine whether they were buying overpriced petroleum products.

This prompted Efren de Luna, president of the Philippine Confederation of Drivers Organizations-Alliance of Concerned Transport Operators, to open their books to the transport sector.

"There has to be transparency," he said.

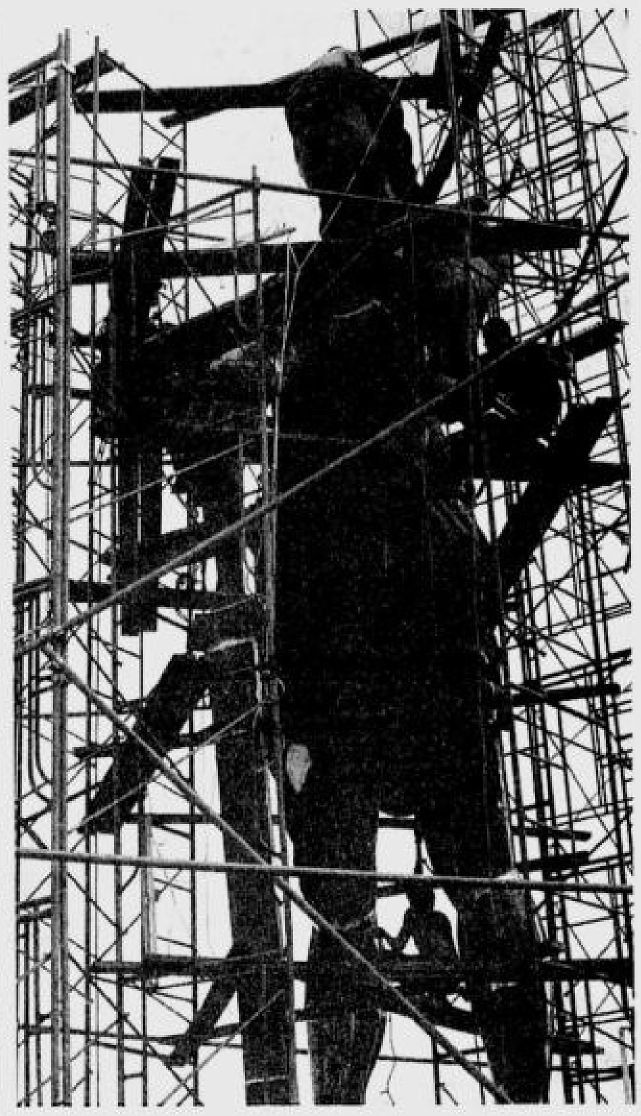
Consumer advocate Raul Concepcion, through his Consumer and Oil Price Watch, expressed the same appeal to oil firms.

But while he agreed that the transport groups' clamors were valid, he did not call for the opening of the oil firms' books.

Instead, he said the DOE should apply a better oil price monitoring system to prevent oil companies from overcharging their customers.

Oil companies have said the 21-percent jump in oil prices from the end of January to the end of February should translate to an average of P2.50 increase in pump prices this month.

Concepcion disputed the amount being claimed by oil firms but did not say how much he thinks it should be. *With a report from Gil Cabacungan*



MAN OF STEEL RAFFY LERMA

Laborers work on the controversial statue of Lapu-Lapu which returns to Luneta amid protests from historians.

Roldan seeks case transfer

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE PASIG City Regional Trial Court branch which will hear his case has not yet scheduled the arraignment of actor and former congressman Dennis Roldan, who had been linked to the abduction of a Chinese-Filipino boy.

But in a motion filed yesterday—a day after his case was raffled off to the Pasig City RTC Branch 261—Roldan immediately asked the court to suspend the proceedings and bring his case back to the Department of Justice.

Roldan also asked the court to withhold the issuance of an arrest warrant against him.

The actor, whose real name is Mitchel Yap Gumabao, is the alleged mastermind in the kidnapping of a three-year-old boy last month.

His group allegedly asked the family for P250 million as ransom.

It came too late

Roldan's lawyers attempted to file the motion right after the case was raffled the other day. But the lawyer supposed to file the case came in late, and court employees were already about to go home.

In his "urgent motion for preliminary investigation and to suspend the proceedings" filed yesterday afternoon, Roldan asked that his case be brought back to the National Prosecution Service, adding that the justice department should first conduct a preliminary investigation on his case.

State prosecutors said Roldan had waived his right to a preliminary investigation by not filing a counter affidavit before the State Prosecutor to answer the allegations.

But in their urgent motion, Roldan's lawyers said the "scandalous haste" in filing the information without any preliminary investigation was "a travesty of his constitutional right to due process."

The actor is the first of eight suspects who had been charged with the crime.

Two of the suspects had named him as their leader.

Gonzalez puts a stop to nighttime, warrantless arrests

By Armand N. Nocum

A CALL from a former colleague in Congress prompted former Iloilo representative and now Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to order the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to stop making nighttime and warrantless arrest of crime suspects.

"You are directed to cease and desist from arresting and/or inviting alleged suspects during nighttime operations," Gonzalez said in a memorandum to NBI Director Reynado Wycoco and Oscar Embido, regional director of the NBI office in Iloilo City.

According to Gonzalez, nighttime arrests can only be done if NBI men are arresting fugitives from justice, escaped prisoners, and those who are nabbed in accordance with the principle of hot pursuit.

Lastly, nocturnal, warrantless arrests can be done if there is strong evidence that a crime has been committed or is about to be committed.

These types of arrest are also applicable if the crime is serious and there are strong reasons to believe that the suspect or suspects must be neutralized in order to maintain the peace and order in the community especially crimes against national security.

"Should it be necessary to effect arrest in accordance with any of the foregoing situations, you should immediately request for an inquest prosecutor to conduct inquest proceeding and inform the arrested persons who will undergo tactical interrogation of his/her counsel of choice," Gonzalez said.

Solon from the 'North'

Gonzalez, a three-term congressman and former deputy speaker of the House of Representatives, said a call from a colleague from the "North," whom he did not identify, convinced him that there should be some sort of regulation in nocturnal arrests by NBI agents.

According to him, the congressman had complained that NBI men accosted his daughter at 11 p.m. last week when she was on a motorbike driven by her husband at The Fort in Taguig.

They were reported to be in the company of other motorcycle enthusiasts.

The NBI men, he said, were claiming that the motorcycles had "questionable papers" and could have been smuggled into the country.

They were then asked to accompany the NBI men to their office for questioning.

Gonzalez said it was at this point that the daughter called her father, who then called the justice secretary.

He said he would have let the matter go had not a barangay official in Iloilo called him last Thursday to say that he was also invited for questioning by NBI agents at about the same time.

Gonzalez said this practice was wrong because it was unfair and unjust to people suspected of committing crimes.

In the dead of the night, he said they could not get lawyers and not have inquest fiscal to attend to them.

"This is a big opening for abuse if not properly guided," he said, recalling that even during martial law, there was a policy that no warrantless arrest should be made at night or weekends.

Atienza takes on Lagman

By Tina G. Santos

TAKING up the cudgels for Catholic bishops, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza has accepted the challenge of Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman for a public debate on the population issue.

Atienza, founder of Pro-Life Philippines, said Lagman should desist from challenging the bishops in a debate and instead face a fellow politician like him.

"The church should not debate with politicians. Politicians should debate among themselves," the mayor said in a statement. "In a proper forum with specific rules and regulations, I am willing to have a public debate with him [Lagman]."

Lagman earlier challenged Catholic bishops to a debate on House Bill 3773 or the Responsible Parenthood and Population Management Act of 1995, which he claimed would define the government's family planning policy and implement programs to address overpopulation.

But Lipa Archbishop Ramon Arguelles described the challenge as a petty dare of a street thug.

Meanwhile, militant women's groups supported the call for national debate and the immediate enactment of HB 3773 saying the state, church or society should not put pressure on them and instead allow them to decide for themselves.

WOMEN'S DAY EXHIBIT

Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia Villar, president of the Lady Legislators of the 13th Congress, leads fellow women lawmakers in opening a photo exhibit marking 100 years of the feminist movement in the Philippines at the House of Representatives.

NBI agent to testify in Aussie trial of Pinoy

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation (NBI) agent is scheduled to testify in an Australian court next week for a Filipino accused of murdering a Tongan in 2002.

Emeterio Armada IV of the NBI Interpol Division is set to leave on Saturday after the New South Wales Supreme Court summoned him to give his testimony as the agent handling Angelito Almirol's case.

2002 killing

A native of Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, Almirol, 41, was accused of killing fellow cheese factory worker Palatavake Tauveli on Dec. 16, 2002.

Almirol surrendered to the NBI in May 2004 and said he would submit himself for voluntary extradition so he could prove his innocence.

Almirol's co-worker Prehector Trocio, who was arrested four months after the crime, confessed to have witnessed the murder, and hiding the victim's body parts in a nearby mountain.

Prior to his extradition in June 2004, Almirol told the NBI agent that it was Trocio who killed the Tongan in a brawl inside the accused's house in New South Wales.

Almirol, who suffers from a physical disability, said it was impossible for him to have committed the grisly murder.

METROBRIEFS

War vs billboards

IN MAKATI'S continuing war against illegal billboards, the casualties have reached double digits. Some 52 billboards have been dismantled since the city banned illegal billboards, the Makati city government reported yesterday. The billboards did not undergo quality tests and should be removed because of potential risks to motorists and the public, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said.. Billboards had collapsed and damaged property along major roads in the past. Dismantled were billboards on Quirino Avenue, C-5 Road, Edsa, President Sergio Osmeña Avenue (formerly South Super Highway), Makati Avenue, and the Guadalupe MRT Station.The City Engineer's Office of Makati counted some 70 billboards without permits on these major roads. Out of these, 52 have been removed, while 17 are up for demolition. *Tarra V. Quismundo*

Parish robbery

THE PARISH store of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish Church on F.B. Harisson Street in Pasay City was robbed of an air-conditioning unit, two water pumps, a two-foot water tank, and two exhaust fans by still unidentified robbers, police said. Fr. Socrates Montealto, executive director of the church went to the Pasay police yesterday morning after he discovered that the equipment was missing from the former parish store across the church. The stolen equipment was worth P29,000, the priest said. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

Canteen row

TEACHERS at the Lakandula High School in Tondo, Manila who had petitioned against the privatization of their canteen have suffered a setback in their fight over its management after a Pasig City judge issued a 20-day temporary restraining order in favor of the private concessionaire. Judge Briccio Ygana of the Pasig Regional Trial Court yesterday ordered Education Undersecretary Jose Luis Martin Gascon, Manila Division Schools Superintendent Dr. Ma. Luisa Quinones, and Lakandula High School principal Olympiada Camilo to refrain from enforcing an order preventing private concessionaire Michelle Pineda from operating the canteen. Gascon earlier ordered the turnover of the canteen's operations to Lakandula's Home Economics Department, until the teacher's cooperative was reorganized. *Tina G.Santos*

PNP on alert

NATIONAL Capital Region Police Office chief, Director Avelino Razon, yesterday urged all district directors to continue to be on alert after receiving information about new terrorist attacks threats particularly in the city of Manila.The order was issued a day after Razon ordered the downgrading of the full alert status to a back to normal situation."Although the information is being verified, we want our units to be prepared to avoid more bombings," Razon said. Safety measures like increased police visibility was also being implemented, he added. *Nancy C. Carvajal*

RMHS '62 meet

MEMBERS of Class '62 of the Ramon Magsaysay High School at España, Manila, will hold a meeting on Sunday, 2 p.m. at Boysie's Bar and Restaurant, 2113-2115 M. H. del Pilar St., Malate, Manila. For details, contact: Angie Sumadchat Panganiban, 5273529 (c/o Leah); Mersey Barcelon Diño, 9362622, 9257934, 0916-5816277; Lito Polintan, 7497891, 0917-7398960; Renato Ang, 0919-8899195; Tizianella Domingo-Reyes, 7814828, 0917-6298010; Carmen Trinidad-Gonzales, 7838890.

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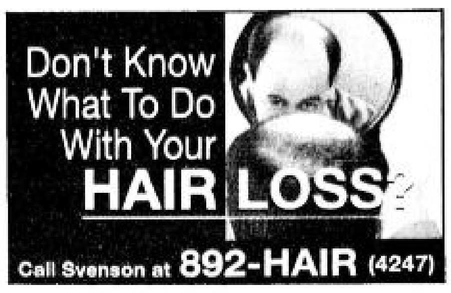
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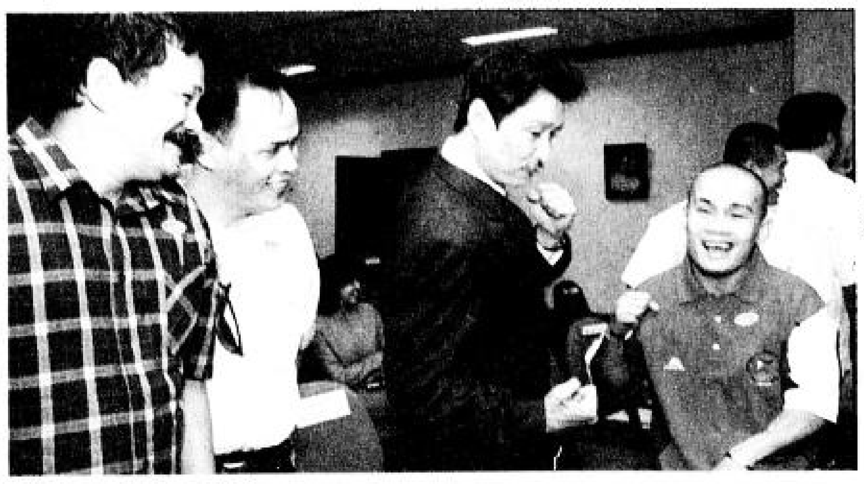

SHOWING 'EM HOW
Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid, a former action star and stuntman, shows off his silver screen fighting form to 1996 Olympic boxing silver medalist Mansueto "Onyok" Velasco (right) and billiards greats Efren "Bata" Reyes (left) and Francisco "Django" Bustamante (2nd from left) during a break in the Senate inquiry into the country's hosting of the 2005 Southeast Asian Games. Lapid is the chair of the committee on Games, Amusements and Sports. *(Story on Page A26)*
JOSEPH VIDA, PRIB/CONTRIBUTOR

Telecom giant rues Globe lockout clause

By Marc Anthony Reyes

SMART has hung up. There goes at least P100 million for the Southeast Asian Games coffers.

Failing to get a workable deal from the Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee, telecommunications giant Smart Communications Inc. has backed out of its bid to be one of the 2005 Southeast Asian Games' major sponsors.

Sources from the Philsoc yesterday revealed the collapse of negotiations between officials of the Philsoc and Smart, which had offered to top the P100-million Gold Package earlier secured by rival firm Globe Telecoms Inc.

Apparently, despite several meetings between Smart chief executive officer Manny Pangilinan and Philsoc ways and means committee chair Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, also president of the Philippine Olympic Committee, the two sides could not find ways to let Smart in on the sponsorship picture without offending Globe.

Globe's deal, which the Philsoc formally availed itself of last Feb. 10, entailed a lockout on all the advertising and marketing opportunities in the industry.

A day after the deal was announced by Philsoc president Obet Pagdanganan, Cojuangco bared that Smart was willing to match that sponsorship and make a separate donation that would be free from the tax shelter which the Philsoc offers.

Cojuangco also said he would work out an arrangement where both Globe and Smart could co-exist, regardless of the lockout provision.

However, nothing clear came out as the lockout arrangement always got into the picture.

The same sources said Smart has already relayed its position to Philsoc.

With only eight months to go before the SEAG starts on Nov. 27, time is running out on the Philsoc, which is still scrounging for funds to meet the projected P800 million to P1 billion in expenses for the biennial meet.

The Philsoc has not come up with a website, a vital tool where participating countries can get updates on the host's preparations.

Also on top of the Philsoc's shopping list are training and competition equipment, estimated to cost P278 million, which are ideally purchased at least six months before the competitions.

The Philsoc earlier admitted that the equipment, once purchased, need at least a month to be shipped as most of them will be bought abroad.

The same sources at Philsoc said there's no money yet to fund the purchases.

Burgess-stirred SMB battles Coke

SAN MIGUEL Beer coach Jong Uichico finds little room to complain about the Beermen's reinforcement this early in the PBA Fiesta Conference.

While Alaska has brought in a familiar face and Sta. Lucia finally welcomed the late arrival of a fresh face supposedly on top of almost everybody's wish list, Uichico has slipped into a comfort zone of sorts with import Chris Burgess.

"He's exactly what we saw in the tapes," said Uichico of Burgess, who produced 22 points and 22 rebounds in the Beermen's 82-73 opening-day victory over Alaska. "He's a team player."

And the Beermen are hoping for another dominating performance from the 6-foot-10 American center when they battle the Coca-Cola Tigers today at the Araneta Coliseum.

"It is a good start to see your import play very well," said Uichico as the Beermen gun for the early conference lead at 4:45 p.m.

In the second game, the Alaska Aces and the Sta. Lucia Realtors are hoping to recover from their first-game losses with the help of new imports when they meet at 7:35 p.m.

RICHARDS: Another chance REM ZAMORA

Alaska re-hired 6-foot-10 Ajani Williams after the dismal performance of Leon Derricks, who finished with only eight points and nine rebounds in 41 minutes of play against the Beermen.

Williams already suited up for the Aces in the 2002 Commissioners' Cup.

Sta. Lucia will field in 6-foot-10 Raheid Brown, who recently played in Argentina and Brazil. He replaced Richard Jeter, who shot only six points and grabbed four rebounds in 36 minutes of action in a 76-65 loss to the Coca-Cola Tigers.

Brown was Sta. Lucia's original choice—and reportedly a top favorite among other teams—but failed to arrive in time for the Realtors' first match.

Tigers import Ja Ja Richards did not have an impressive debut—at least, offensively—but the coaching staff is giving him the luxury of a second chance before deciding on his fate.

"He needs to assert himself," said Tigers coach Eric Altamirano of Richards, who grabbed a game-high 16 rebounds but scored only eight points. "We'll see how he plays in the next few games and then we'll decide [if he'll stay]."

The bright spot for the teams that encountered import woes early on was that the locals showed they can step up when needed to. In beating the Realtors, the Tigers turned to John Arigo in the final minutes to hammer out the victory.

Alaska, on the other hand, got big games from Jeffrey Cariaso and Don Allado, who had earlier asked for a trade in the off-season. Marlou Aquino sprung a refreshing surprise for Sta. Lucia as he pumped in 20 points. *Jasmine W. Payo*

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Antonio, Mariano ahead

SAN FERNANDO CITY, La Union—Grandmasters Joey Antonio and Nelson Mariano II led a bunch of two-pointers in the 4th La Union Open Chess Championships yesterday at the Diego Silang Hall of the provincial capitol here.

The 41-year-old Antonio, pride of the Philippine Army, defeated Julio Busaing of Baguio City in 45 moves of a Nimzo Indian Defense in the first round then nipped NM Nick Nisperos of Meycauayan, Bulacan, in 65 moves of a Sicilian Defense-Alapin variation.

Antonio next faces NM Rustom Tolentino, who won over Reynaldo Villalobos and Ireneo "Ernie" Gonzales, respectively.

The fourth-seeded Mariano whipped local hero Dean Joseph Jularbal in 40 moves of a Sicilian Defense and NM Alex Milagrosa after 49 pushes of a Center Counter duel to match Antonio's total in this tournament that offers P75,000 to the champion. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

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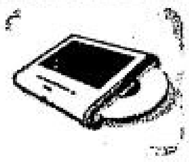
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AirPhil snatches 6-5 center

By Marc Anthony Reyes

AIR Philippines made 6-foot-5 slotman Kenneth Coyukang the No. 1 pick during yesterday's drafting for the PBL Unity Cup.

From among 70 aspirants, the Flight chose the Jose Rizal University center in their bid to finally take off after landing eighth and last in their maiden flight in the Open Championship last month.

Coyukang, a senior management student, could not hide his surprise when called by coach Lawrence Cheongson as he was unheralded even in the NCAA.

"He's going to be a big help to us, especially in the middle," said Cheongson. "He's a fundamentally sound player, we needed a player like him."

Two more 6-foot-5 players were named as picks No. 2 and 3 after Toyota Otis-Letran picked Frankly Nailon and Granny Goose chose Marvin Mercado.

Rommel Dizon, drafted by Magnolia Dairy Ice Cream, wound up as the No. 4 choice, followed by Carlo Manding of Welcoat Paints. Joseph Educalani went to Montana Pawnshop, while Jayson Tingson joined newcomer Harbour Centre.

Of the players in the draft, only 19 got invitations from different teams.

Among the players being eyed by Harbour Centre are LA Tenorio, Gabby Espinas, Rey Mendoza, Jason Castro, Jenkins Mesina and Magnum Membrere. Tonichi Yturri will call the shots for the team, with Gil Cortez as team manager and Derek Pumaren as team consultant.

The Flight also picked UE Warriors ace point guard Robert Labagala, while the Knights drafted Robert Barnson.

Others who made it to the second round were Richard Saladaga (Granny Goose), Rovie Baguio (Magnolia), Jeffrey Morial (Welcoat) and Edbert Ton (Harbour).

Welcoat shopped until the fifth round, snagging five, including Rogelio Nacpil, Michael de Guzman and Norman Nuñez.

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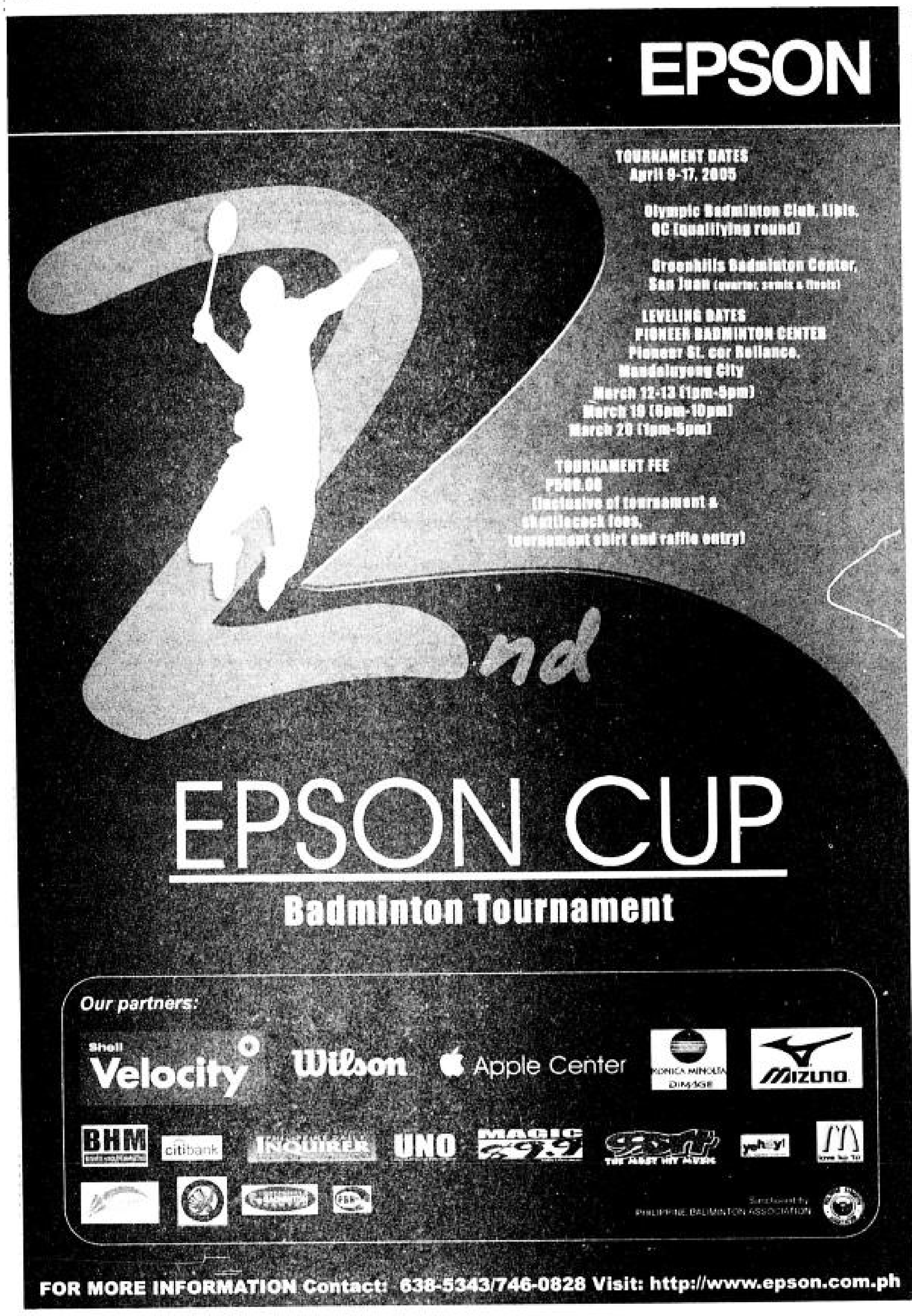
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Can Pacquiao KO a great doll?

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

LOS ANGELES—The call of the moment is for a severe scrutiny, with strict police assistance, if you please.

Team Pacquiao must play it very shrewdly because, in the end, it will all boil down to how well the opponent has been scouted.

No problem, nothing to worry, assured trainer Buboy Fernandez.

Manny Pacquiao's trusted Pinoy handler sounded like a trained cop yesterday as he kept watch over Pacquiao in their rented two-room apartment on Sunset Boulevard.

The most famous living Filipino was taking his usual bed rest after another long morning jog around the hills of Hollywood.

Pacquiao's weight is ideal: 129 lbs., one under the super featherweight limit, despite feasting like a king.

Same with the sparring: Over 100 rounds against taller partners who simulated the stance and style of Erik Morales.

Fernandez said Pacquiao could ramble against Morales anytime.

The trainer assured he was not bragging, but merely reporting a happy fact.

***

Well, Pacquiao need not be told that Erik Morales has been exuding the same confidence.

In fact, unlike Team Pacquiao, the Mexican camp did not have to dig hard to measure the terror kept in Pacquiao's blazing left fist.

The Mexicans have definitely made advance preparations on how to lessen the impact, if not totally deflect the killer punch.

There's no way they could defuse the Pacquiao bomb.

But, with their information on the terror in Pacquiao's fist, it cannot be said the RP boxing hero would enter the ring with a concealed weapon.

At the same time, Morales cannot just shrug off what Pacquiao and his chief trainer, Freddie Roach, had bragged about a secret weapon they plan to explode on fight night.

Team Pacquiao went as far as labelling it "Manila Ice," a ploy allegedly perfected to stop the Mexican warrior cold.

***

All things told, Pacquiao appears to be enjoying a slight edge in the pre-fight psy-war.

But that's only if you're reading the fight blurbs, not to mention the taunts from the Filipino camp.

A closer, more concerned scrutiny would, however, bare that Team Pacquiao may have overlooked a crucial plus point in Morales' armory.

This has obviously escaped the eyes of many fight students. But Pacquiao could be totally ignorant about the unshakeable gift that has saved Morales from being knocked out in all his bouts.

His durability could make it appear that Morales is gifted with an unbreakable chin.

The Mexican warrior has rare qualities that make his head roll and swivel out of harm's way upon being hit.

Morales could, in fact, be likened to a doll with a magical mechanism around the neck.

It was almost impossible to nail him down with a blow to the head.

Trying that could be as futile, frustrating as pushing a rubber ball into a pail of water.

***

Well, these qualities are obviously inborn. But they were visibly developed into a solid defensive edge through dedication and patience.

Maybe Freddie Roach has himself noticed this Morales gift.

But, Pacquiao, who tends to "swallow" blows, cannot be instantly taught to copy Morales's heady advantage.

What's necessary now is an adjustment in artillery.

It would not be easy to stop Morales with the usual swinging punch, also a Pacquiao favorite.

So would Pacquiao next try to emphasize on a new weapon, like that slicing uppercut that sent Thai Fahsan 3K Battery airborne then flat on the floor in Taguig last December?

This we will know from Freddie Roach.

Or is that explosive new blow part of the "Manila Ice" plot?

Ilagan rejects POC decision

EMBATTLED former swimming president Chito Ilagan yesterday denied that he changed the composition of the Pasa board last year to ensure his reelection, a charge brought forward by the Philippine Olympic Committee when it conferred its recognition to the faction led by Mark Joseph.

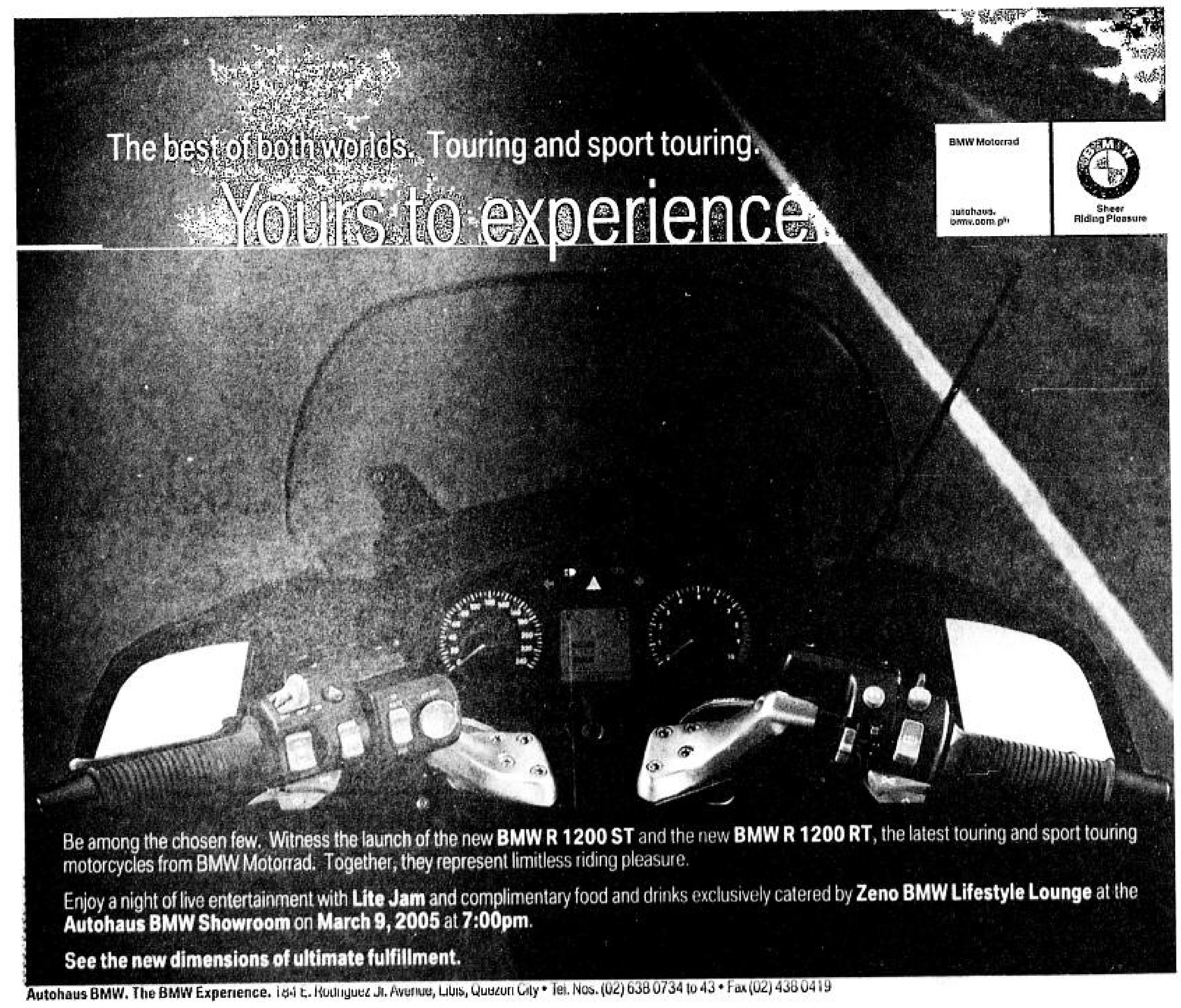
"I don't know where they got [that notion]," Ilagan said through a press statement, saying the regional board of the Philippine Amateur Swimming Association (Pasa) is autonomous and not subject to tinkering.

"It is impossible to control the decision of the board because [it is made up of] independent [members]."

Ilagan also said the president of the National Capital Region swimming association, lawyer Bernadette Abejo, who is also a member of the current Pasa board, denied that any manipulation took place in last year's board composition.

The arbitration committee's new ruling was in direct contrast to the one reached by former POC president Celso Dayrit during his term.

Dayrit, pointing out that Joseph wasn't a regional director, affirmed Ilagan's election as swimming president.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Gordon lashes Philsoc over slow SEAG show

THE SENATE Committee on Games, Amusement and Sports yesterday expressed dissatisfaction on the status of the country's hosting of the Southeast Asian Games slated Nov. 27 to Dec. 5.

Sen. Richard Gordon questioned the delays in the preparations and the failure of the SEAG organizers to create an awareness campaign on the biennial meet.

Philippine Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee (Philsoc) officials, however, reasoned that they started on a "zero budget."

"I'm concerned about our mentality, our attitude," said Gordon. "We wait until the last minute and then we try to catch up."

"I've been very concerned about our hosting of the SEA Games. Among other things, there are questions raised about our ability to host."

Philsoc vice chair Jose "Peping" Cojuangco noted, however, that his team has been working on corporate deals to bankroll the event.

"The machinery is there," said Cojuangco. "But I think that with the commitment given by donors ... I think we'll get results." *Jasmin W. Payo*

Laguna booters waylay Ilonggos

Negros holds off NCR

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Philippine Army-backed Laguna ended Iloilo's bid to advance to the next stage by forcing a 1-1 draw and topped Group A eliminations of the 2005 PFF-adidas National Men's Championship at the Don Gregorio Pelaez Sports Center here.

In the day's keenly awaited third game, reigning champion NCR and 2003 winner Negros Occidental battled to a similar 1-1 standoff with the referee kept on his toes by the two highly physical Group B title favorites.

Overshadowed by football-hotbed Iloilo's shock exit was the scintillating form of the youthful Davao squad which barged into the semifinals with a 4-1 conquest of host Cagayan de Oro-Misamis Oriental. Like Iloilo, the hosts were booted out of contention.

Iloilo ahead

The Ilonggos, cheered on by the majority in the stands, looked headed to toppling Laguna in the 60th minute when Ardisel Juarez volleyed past the Laguna keeper from 18 yards out.

But the rugged Laguna booters worked patiently in search of an equalizer and were rewarded 17 minutes later when Roy Auro scored just inside the penalty box off a pinpoint pass from the right wing.

A victory would have sent Iloilo to the semifinals and knocked out Laguna.

Striker Jerome Junsay scored back-to-back goals for Davao in the 18th and 25th minutes before Allan Fernandez and Evelito Mortillero put the Davaoeños beyond reach with markers in the 40th and 76th minutes.

Ricky Rodriguez broke the host's goal drought with a strike in the 35th minute.

Ploy backfires

Fleet-footed Reydric Viliran broke the ice for the Victorias Sardines-backed Negros Occidental in the 11th minute as NCR's off-side ploy backfired.

Coach Edward Joel Antony's charges took 56 minutes to finally equalize. Prized striker Jimmy Dona eluded his markers to ram home the NCR goal in the 67th minute.

In all, the referee flashed 11 yellow—five on Negros and six on NCR players—and three red cards, two of them on the charges of Negros coach Norman Fegidero.

Zamboanga downed Quezon, 3-1, Monday in the tournament supported by Red Ribbon Bakeshop, Petron and SuperFerry.

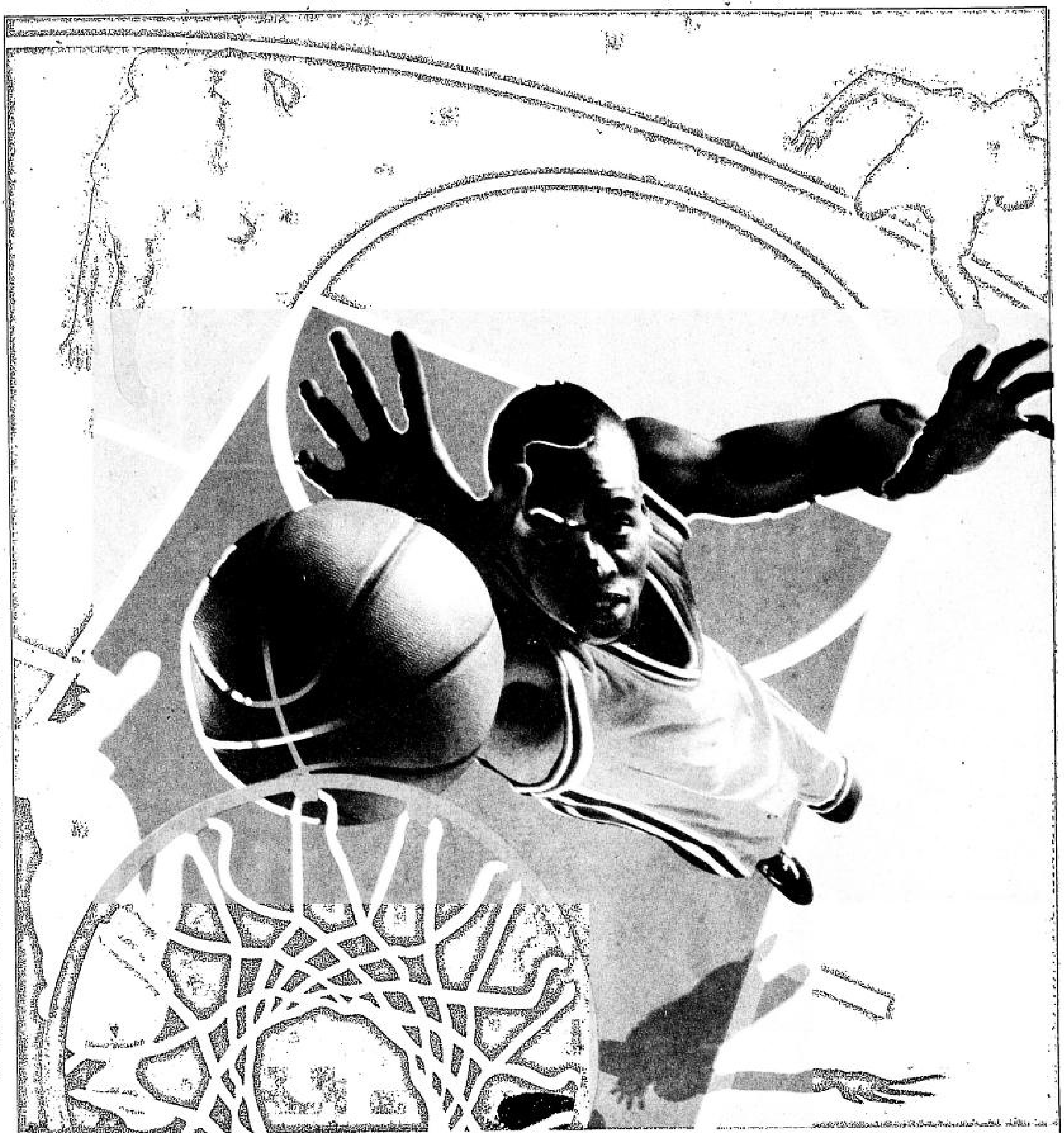
Jaguar-Land Rover golf tilt under way

AN ELITE cast of 200 Jaguar owners, guests from the business sector and government are seeing action in the five-day 6th Jaguar-Land Rover Golf Invitational at the Santa Elena Golf and Country Club in Laguna.

The event, which teed off last Sunday and will end tomorrow, will select the country's representatives to the Jaguar World Golf in Glen Eagles, Scotland, this year.

The champion team will be flown to Scotland by KLM-Air France, the tournament's official carrier. MAA Assurance Phils. Inc. is staking a brand-new Jaguar X-Type for the first player to score a hole-in-one.

Other tournament sponsors are MAA Insurance, Lucerne Jewelers and Gerald, Genta & Daniel, Store Specialists (La Coste), Petron Corp., Globe Platinum, Philippine Allied Enterprises/Bridgestone, Intercontinental Hotel, MAA General Insurance Phils., Sony Phils., Maybank, Pepsi Cola, EXO Armoring, Ten Knots Development Corp./El Nido Resorts, Ferrari-Maserati Phils., Schering-Plough Corp., Diageo Phils., Unilever, Bose and Leisurecrafts Asia Inc.



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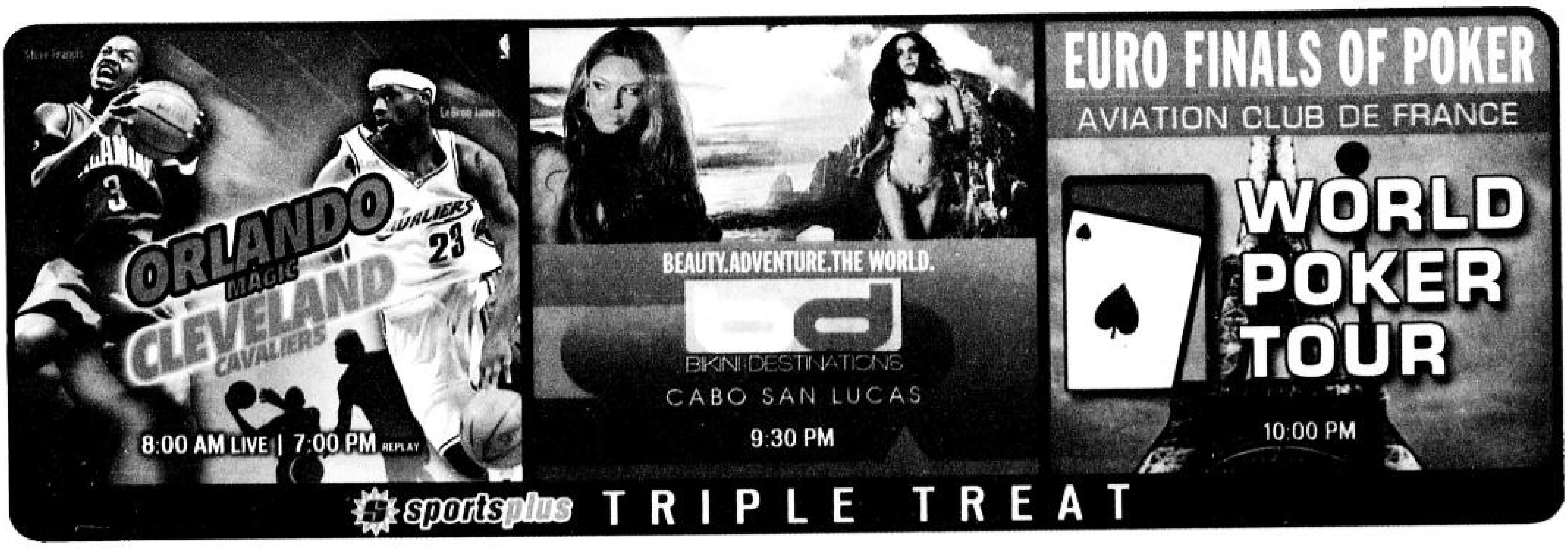

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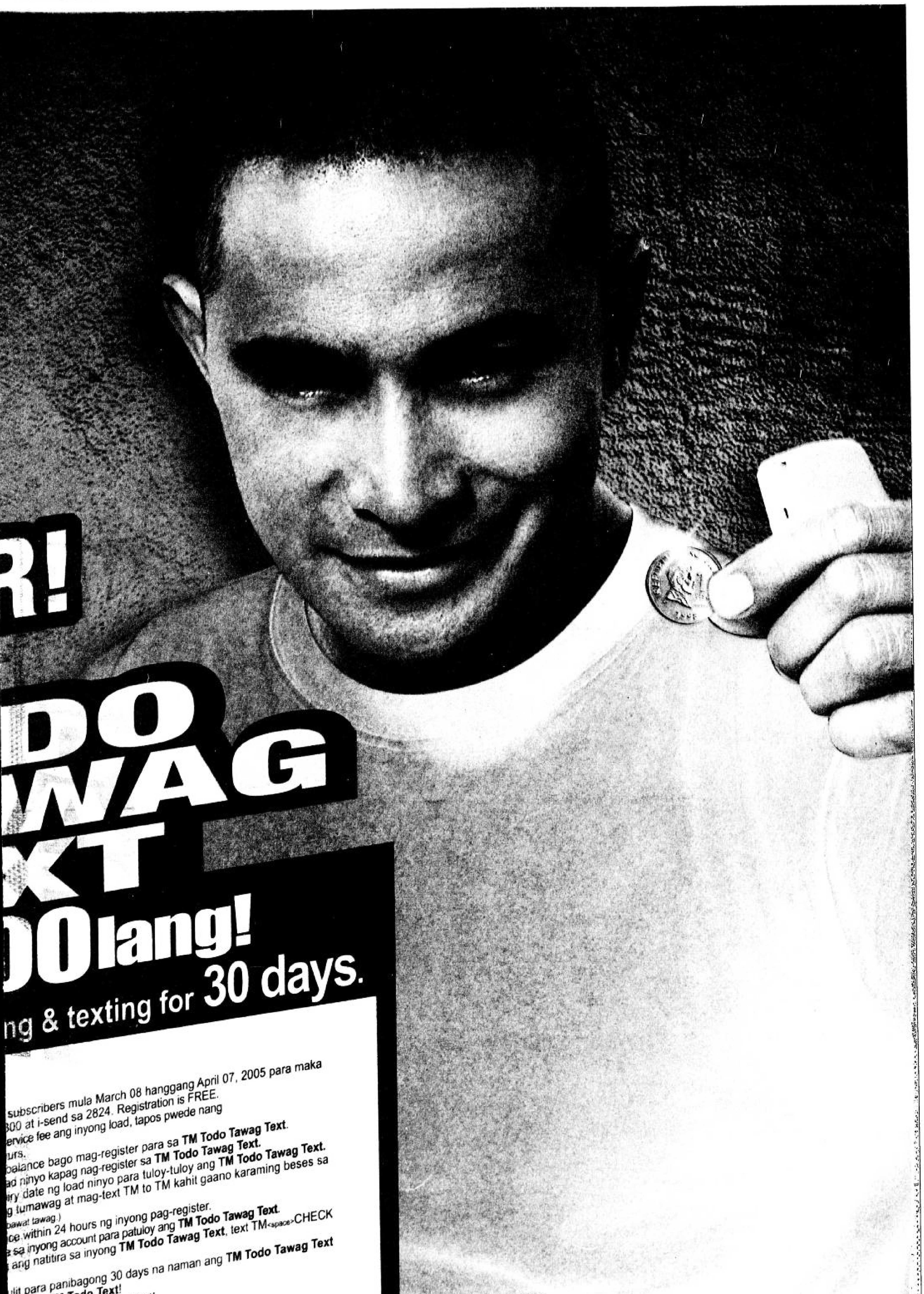

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LAKAS NG GLOBE

Tiger's tougher task: Staying at No. 1

MIAMI—Getting back to No. 1 in the world wasn't easy for Tiger Woods.

It took him eight tournaments over six months to nudge past Vijay Singh in the world ranking. And it required a Herculean effort against Phil Mickelson to win the Ford Championship at Doral, including some clutch shots that will be talked about the rest of the year.

"That was special," Woods said of his duel with Mickelson.

The last time Woods took over No. 1 in the world ranking, he won a memorable duel by making a clutch putt on the 17th hole at Medinah to beat 19-year-old Sergio Garcia at the 1999 US PGA Championship.

Woods then stayed on top for the next 264 weeks.

This time, it might not be that easy.

His reign could be over at the end of this week, or perhaps the end of the month.

Increased competition

"He's certainly going to have increased competition that he hasn't had in past years," Jack Nicklaus said Monday. "You heard me a couple of years ago. What will happen to Tiger? I said a lot of his competition had not shown up yet, or guys playing against him will raise the level of their golf game."

Nicklaus identified Mickelson, Singh and Retief Goosen, all of whom won majors last year and all of whom were in the top eight at Doral, as potential rivals. Halfway around the world, Ernie Els produced a dramatic finish of his own by making an 18-foot eagle on the last hole to win the Dubai Desert Classic.

The list of challengers is longer than ever.

Singh might be able to return to No. 1 this week if he wins the Honda Classic.

Hottest player

Els' victory in Dubai was his first of the year and puts him in a good frame of mind on the road to the US Masters. He is close enough that he could be No. 1 by the end of the month.

Mickelson lost another final-round showdown with Woods, although he still might be the hottest player in golf. Coming off a five-shot victory in Phoenix and a beginning-to-end victory at Pebble Beach, Mickelson spent 10 consecutive rounds atop the leaderboard in stroke play and was shocked the streak didn't stretch to 11.

"I felt like I was playing better than anybody," Mickelson said. "I just knew I was going to win, and when I didn't, it was a great slap in the face. Because I'm going to work my tail off to salvage a couple more shots. When I come back to The Players Championship and the Masters, I'm going to be ready."

Dynamic as ever

On the surface, Woods looks as dynamic as ever.

After going four years without a comeback victory, Woods now has two in a row. He came from two shots down at Torrey Pines against Tom Lehman, then made up a two-shot deficit against Mickelson in the final round at Doral.

Woods beat Mickelson, but not without a tremendous effort.

"That shows you what kind of competitor Phil is," Woods said.

Equally impressive are the first two months of the PGA Tour season.

Singh won the Sony Open with a birdie on the final hole, after Els had closed with a 62. Woods and Mickelson each have won twice. And while Els squandered two chances in Hawaii, the victory in Dubai was important.

Question mark

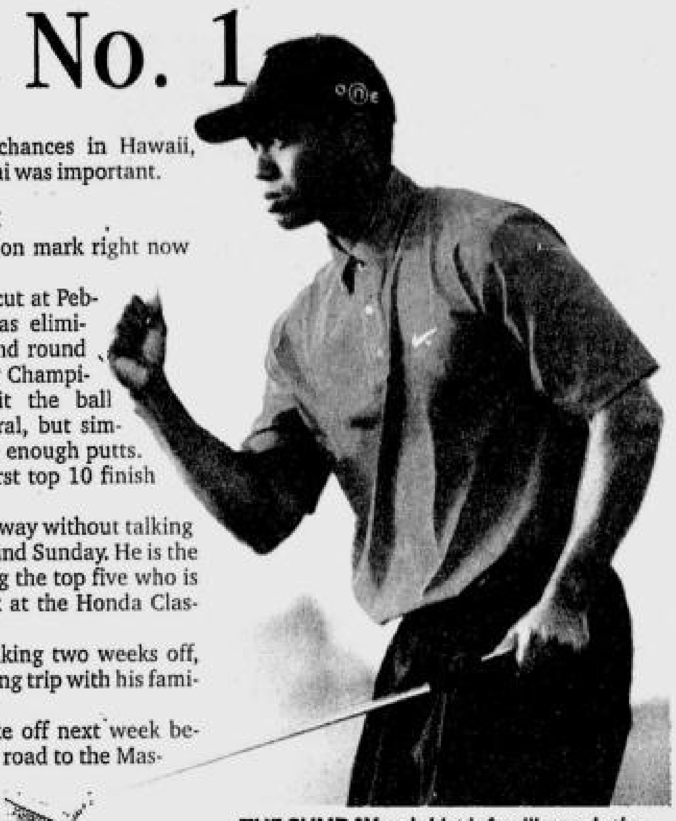
The only question mark right now is Singh.

He missed the cut at Pebble Beach and was eliminated in the second round of the Match Play Championship. Singh hit the ball beautifully at Doral, but simply couldn't make enough putts. Still, it was his first top 10 finish since Hawaii.

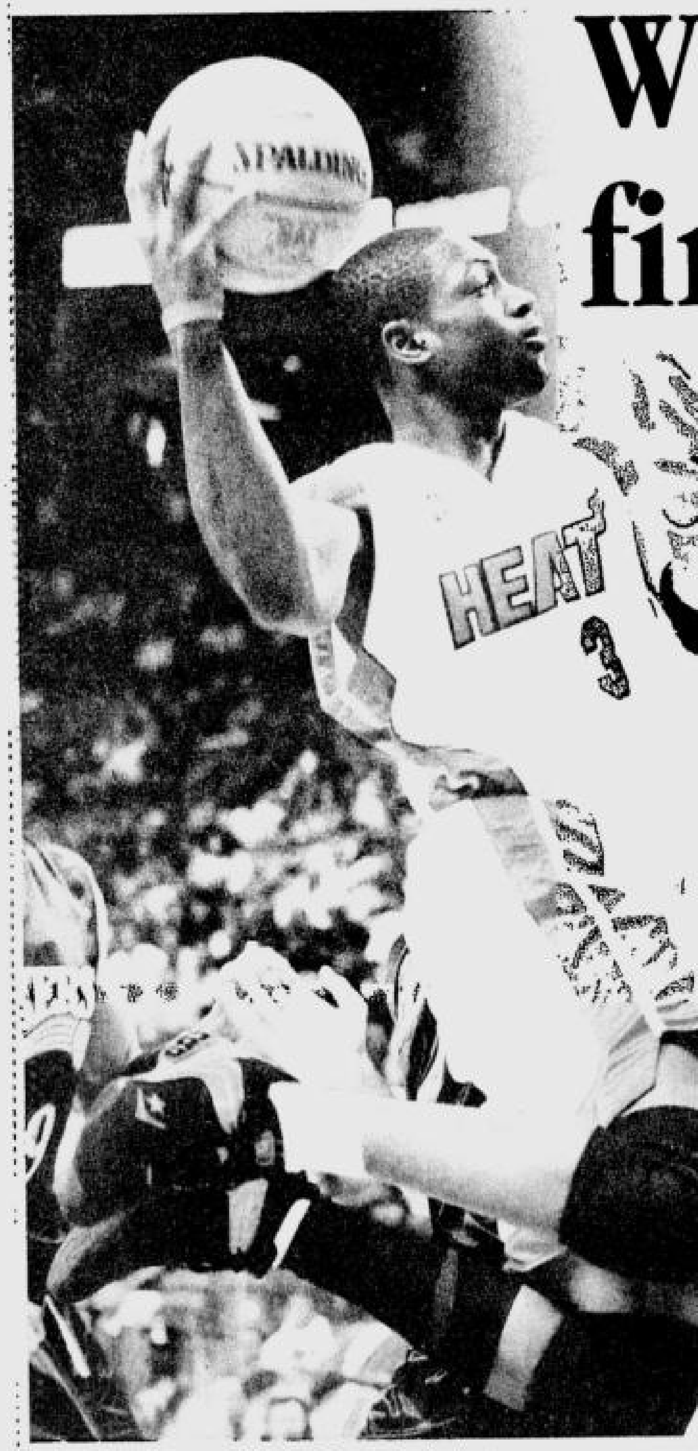
Singh slipped away without talking about his final round Sunday. He is the only player among the top five who is playing this week at the Honda Classic.

Mickelson is taking two weeks off, one of those a skiing trip with his family in Colorado.

Woods will take off next week before resuming his road to the Masters—Bay Hill, The Players Championship, a week to practice and then on to Augusta, where he could find a large crowd of players capable of stopping him. *AP*



THE SUNDAY red shirt is familiar, so is the fist-pumping routine. The question is, how long can Tiger Woods keep striking the same victorious pose? REUTERS



MIAMI guard Dwayne Wade drives to the basket. REUTERS

Wade, Shaq fire up Heat

MIAMI—Looking nothing like a team playing its fourth game in five nights, Miami got 32 points from Dwyane Wade and 25 more from Shaquille O'Neal to beat the Philadelphia 76ers, 108-100, on Monday.

The Heat shot 54.9 percent from the field, extended their winning streak to six games, won their 10th straight at home—and moved a step closer to clinching the Southeast Division title. Miami has an 11-game lead over Washington in the division race; the Heat have 20 games remaining.

"We just have to worry about what we're supposed to worry about and keep beating the teams we're supposed to beat," O'Neal said. "Keep winning at home, and keep staying above .500 on the road. If we do those things, then by that formula itself things will work out."

Wade made 18 free throws to set a franchise record; he got to the line 23 times. Shandon Anderson had 13 points, and Udonis Haslem had a 12-point, 10-rebound night for Miami (46-16), which has an eight-game lead over Detroit in the Eastern Conference.

"We clearly didn't have what it takes to win tonight against a quality team," said Philadelphia coach Jim O'Brien, whose club fell a half-game behind Indiana in the chase for the East's eighth and final playoff spot.

In Dallas, Marquis Daniels had a season-high 32 points and Jason Terry added 23 to help the Mavericks beat the Toronto Raptors, 113-105, without the help of Dirk Nowitzki.

Nowitzki, averaging 26.9 points and 10.1 rebounds, missed his second straight game for the Mavericks because of a bruised left knee. Dallas also played without the injured Michael Finley, Erick Dampier and Jerry Stackhouse.

In Chicago, Kirk Hinrich scored 12 of his 17 points in the fourth quarter, and the Bulls held off the Milwaukee Bucks for their 30th victory, 90-85, tying the Bulls' most in a season since they won their sixth championship in 1997-98.

In Denver, Carmelo Anthony had 23 points before sitting out the fourth quarter and the Nuggets trounced the Portland Trail Blazers, 111-98, for their seventh straight win, the team's longest streak in 16 years.

Denver is 14-4 under coach George Karl, has won eight straight home games and has made up 6 1/2 games on the Los Angeles Lakers in a little over a month to tie for eighth in the West.

In Los Angeles, Lorenzen Wright scored 23 points, Brian Cardinal had 20 and the Memphis Grizzlies nearly blew a 13-point lead in the final 2:17 before beating the Clippers, 105-102, for their fourth straight victory. *AP*

Danao kicks off Speedo triathlon series

SOME 70 local and foreign athletes are set to participate in the seven-leg Speedo-National Age Group Triathlon (NAGT) series kicking off in Danao City in Cebu on March 13.

Organized by the Triathlon Association of the Philippines (TRAP) as part of its developmental program nationwide, last year's series produced Sean Lim and Alexandra Ganzon as overall champions.

"This program has expanded our base of participants for triathlon on a national scale considering that our venues cover Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao," said TRAP president Tom Cassasco Jr.

Local organizer Team Rambo, headed by councilor and Danao City Sports Commission chair Boying Rodriguez, welcomed the choice of Danao City as venue for the inaugural leg.

The event also has the backing of the Danao City government headed by Mayor Ramon Durano and Danao Telecom.

The series, also sponsored by David's Salon, PowerBar, Asian Centre for Insulation, Stronghold Insurance, and New Balance, is not open to national team members and the national training pool to encourage non-ranked triathletes.

The series will feature different age-group categories in the men's and women's competitions.

For inquiries and registration, please contact Boying Rodriguez, 0917-3288880, Dong Sarmiento, 0917-7561403, and Carlo Carrasco, 0916-4494789 or visit www.triathlon.org.ph.

Spring vs Valencia in NBC-Sulpicio tilt

VALENCIA CITY—The NBC-Sulpicio Lines preseason basketball series unwraps today with the Spring Cooking Oil-backed Laguna Spring facing Valencia's Golden Harvest squad in a two-game series at the city gym here.

The two teams will square off at 6 p.m. Valencia City sports coordinator Rico Ocho will handle the Golden Harvest boys in the series assisted by Jimmy Bayson while the team is still scouting for a veteran coach.

Among the strong contenders for Valencia's coaching job are Arvin Martinez, Cagayan de Oro Stars' assistant mentor last season, and Noli Tagsit of the GMC-backed General Feedmasters of the Cebu Basketball Federation. The series will also serve as a test for local talents Jester Adams, Rommel Cesar and Rocky Clavel. The Spring of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Laguna Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro finished a strong second in the NBC-Panasonic preseason event in Cebu last January under the mentorship of former PBA enforcer Vic "Rambo" Sanchez.

The 2005 National Basketball Championship, now sanctioned by the Basketball Association of the Philippines, is set to start on April 15 in Baguio City and Cagayan de Oro City.

SPORTSWATCH

Rizal Tech routs TIP five

RIZAL Technological University routed Technological Institute of the Philippines, 88-68, at the resumption of the 1st SMART Golf Cup Women's Collegiate Basketball Tournament at the EAC Gym last Friday. The Rizal Tech cagers drew 15 points from Victoria Binalla to dominate TIP and post their second win in three games. On Feb. 28, Rizal Tech dumped La Consolacion College, 89-41. In the other game, Trinity College drew firepower from Siellah Milloria to crush Emilion Aguinaldo College, 72-40. Siellah scored 20 points while Laarni Alday contributed 14. EAC was led by Dian Kristine Cas, who had 18 points. Rizal Tech's only loss came from AMA Computer, 45-49. Feb. 22 results saw Trinity dump La Consolacion 52-31; TIP nip EAC 55-51; and AMA beat TIP.

Lhuillier win to spur slo-pitch growth

CEBUANA Lhuillier's back-to-back Super Division championships in the recent Pangaea Cup international slo-pitch softball tournament at the Alabang Country Club is expected to jump-start the sport's development in the country. Cebuana Lhuillier routed Dubai-based Just 1 More team, 26-6, in their championship match. Cebuana Lhuillier playing team owner Jean Henri Lhuillier emphasized the importance of his team's victory in his bid to promote local slo-pitch softball. Lhuillier said he intends to hold the first Asian championship tournament this August here with at least eight foreign teams competing.

DSCP ranking and competition

THE DANCE Sport Council of the Philippines will stage the 2005 DSCP First Quarter Ranking and Competition at the Philsports Arena on March 19. DSCP president Becky Garcia said dance athletes from all over the country are taking part in both Latin American and Modern Standard disciplines, adding that five international licensed adjudicators are arriving to serve as judges in the competition sponsored by Petron Corp., BMW Philippines, Philippine Sports Commission, Philippine Olympic Committee, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Manila Times, Water Zone, Savannah Moon, Joey 92.3 Rhythm and Edsa Shangri-La Hotel.

Rotary fishing tourney Saturday

THE ROTARY International district 3830 fishing tournament and fellowship is set Saturday, March 12, at the LWT888 Fishing Place on Covelandia Road, Cavite. With a tournament fee of P600 per head, the tourney awards participants free of charge if they all caught milkfish. The 11th annual fund-raiser is open in five categories. Backing the event are Mayor Jun Bernabe, The Nichols Airport Hotel, RCPN past presidents Darly de Roca, Bing Lee and Danny Yao, Victor V. Villavicencio and Eduardo Alvarez. Fishing starts at 8 a.m. and ends 1 p.m. For details, call 8332166, 8323694, 8338033 or 09178259, 09178267234.

Milo BEST makes Notre Dame return

AFTER a two-year break, Milo BEST Center's summer basketball program returns to Notre Dame of Greater Manila, Caloocan City, every Wednesday and Saturday from April 6-30. Level 1 and 2 classes will be conducted at Notre Dame from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Advanced registration will start from 8 to 5 p.m. on March 11. For details, call or visit The BEST Center, 34 Scout Lozano, Barangay Laging Handa, QC, 4116260 and 3723066 or Sensei Salon/Dansei Groom Shop, 5th Floor, Manila Pavilion Hotel, UN Avenue, Manila 5258191.

Matabungkay Bikini Open March 10-12

A MULTISPORTS and fun games weekend capped by a bikini open competition await spectators and guests in the 2nd Matabungkay Bikini Open 2005 in Lian, Batangas. The event is expected to attract male and female physical fitness buffs from nearby provinces and Metro Manila. The affair is backed by San Miguel Beer, Frederick Alba Haute Colture Fashion House, Cable Ads Channel, and Webstar.com Phil. Entertainment. Also supporting the event are Bioessence, Godiva, Belo medical group, UK Beauty products, Eye Wear House, and Sizzling Stop.

Makati White stays unbeaten

MAKATI White, Marikina Brown and Valenzuela Light Blue remained unbeaten after Week 4 of the First Global Destiny Basketball League eliminations in matches held last weekend in various gyms all over Metro Manila. Makati White swamped Makati Gray, 146-37, for its third straight win; Marikina Brown crushed Marikina Red, 85-42, to also post a 3-0 mark, and Valenzuela Light Blue streaked to its fourth victory by ripping Valenzuela Black, 85-42. San Juan Yellow kept pace after winning its third consecutive match by default over San Juan Blue in the grassroots basketball program launched by the cable TV giant, which offers a P200,000 prize to the champion.

Miko Fatman derby starts today

TOUGHER action is anticipated when the Miko Fatman 6-Cock Derby second round of eliminations gets under way today at the air-conditioned Pasay City Cockpit. Seeing action today are about 50 powerhouse entries, with the championship round set on Friday. The early qualifiers of the event that has Sagupaan Complexor 3000, Sagupaan Mite Free and Sagupaan B-50 Forten as sponsors posted two wins each last Monday. Meanwhile, Superfights II Fastest Win set March 14 and 16 with a guaranteed prize of P1.1 million will start at 7 a.m. Registration is 6 a.m. For inquiries, call 8431890, 8431746 and 8166750.

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Question of the Week

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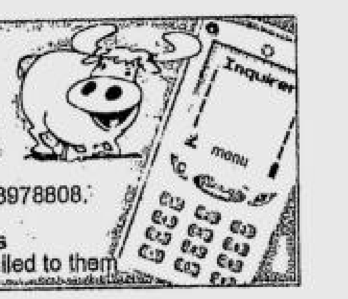
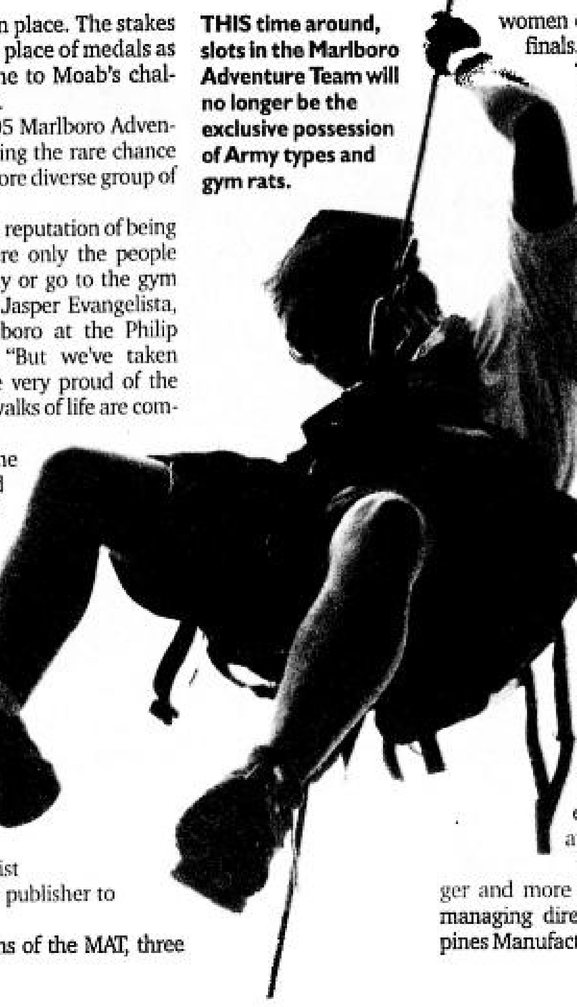


Bigger adventure for elite MAT team



THE CHALLENGES are in place. The stakes are the same—bruises in place of medals as a reward for having gone to Moab's challenging terrain and back.

Only this time, the 2005 Marlboro Adventure Team (MAT) is opening the rare chance to push one's limits to a more diverse group of competitors.

"Before, the MAT had a reputation of being a 'militaristic camp' where only the people who come from the Army or go to the gym [regularly] qualify," said Jasper Evangelista, brand manager of Marlboro at the Philip Morris Philippines Inc. "But we've taken down that barrier; We're very proud of the fact that people from all walks of life are coming to join."

The diversification of the MAT has actually started already. Last year, the five adventure-seekers who survived the grueling national finals that simulated the adventure tests offered in Moab, Utah, came from different backgrounds—from an occupational therapist to a field engineer and a publisher to an entrepreneur.

In the last two editions of the MAT, three women even made it to the national finals.

THIS time around, slots in the Marlboro Adventure Team will no longer be the exclusive possession of Army types and gym rats.

To accommodate a growing number of thrill-seekers, the MAT increased its national finals base from 25 last year to 50 this year. A total of 2,000 sign-up forms will be drawn initially from all over the country, 400 each from Northern Luzon, the National Capital Region, Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

From the randomly picked names, 500 semifinalists will be chosen and based on a series of interviews and submitted documents, 50 individuals will be selected to go to Tagaytay for the national finals to take place on April 11 to 15.

Then out of the national finals, Marlboro will pick out five names and fly them to Moab, Utah, for a 12-day odyssey from Aug. 19 to 31.

Sign-up forms for interested applicants will only be available until March 27.

"This year's MAT is much bigger and more exciting," said Chris Nelson, managing director of Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing Inc.

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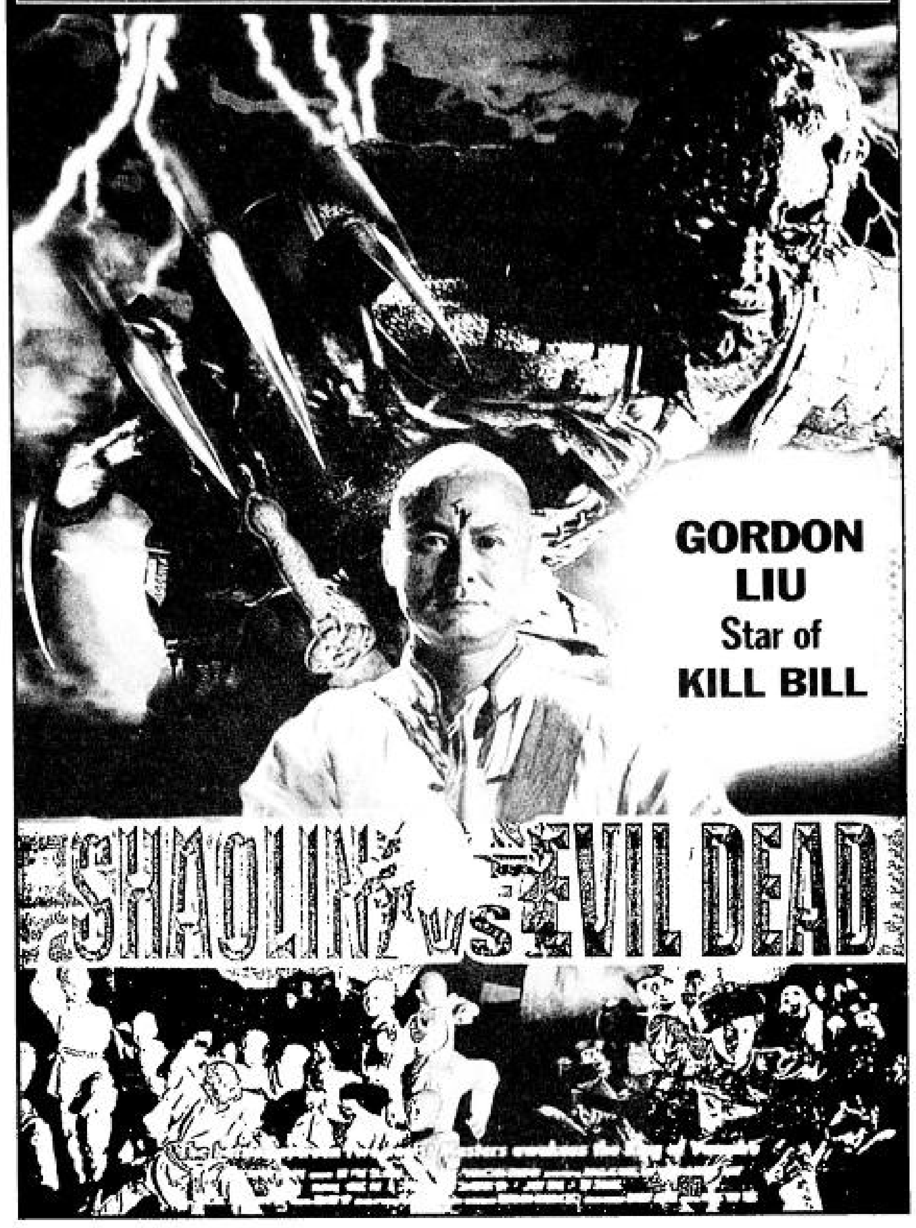

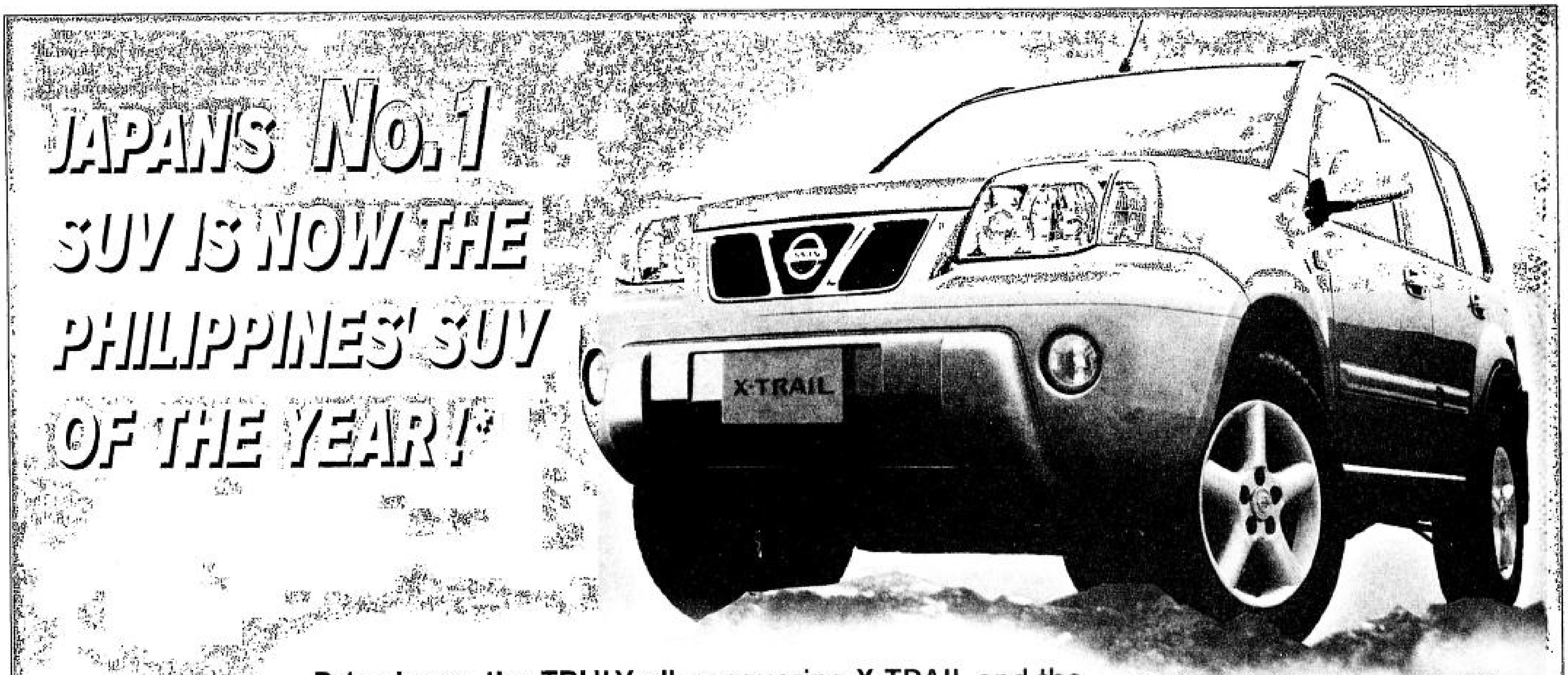

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SPORTS

Four-way tie for DHL golf lead

CANLUBANG, Laguna—Canlubang bets Boyet Saragoza and JR Tanpinco stepped up for their fancied teammates on a scorching day at Cangolf's north course yesterday, firing identical one-under par 71s for a share of the lead with two rivals from Southwoods at the start of the 10th DHL-WWWExpress National Amateur Golf Championships here.

SARAGOZA

Saragoza, who has long stayed in the shadows of Cangolf top guns Juvic Pagunsan and Jun Bernis, and Tanpinco both bogeyed the par-4 17th to drop into a tie with the Carmona-based Michael Bibat and Tonton Asistio.

Bibat and Asistio both birdied the first two holes but failed to sustain that charge and finished with 35-36 and 37-34 cards, respectively, in a curious first-round result many believe would turn into another Canlubang-Southwoods showdown like the one in the just-concluded PAL Interclub in Bacolod.

The hosts, who lost the crown to Southwoods by 2 just points, are seeking revenge in this four-day championship sponsored by DHL World Express and WWWExpress.

Pagunsan and Bernis, Cangolf's 1-2 punch, fired 73 and 75, respectively.

Earlier, Rod Feliciano, honorary chair of the National Golf Association of the Philippines and chair of the sponsoring DHL and WWWExpress, and NGAP president Benny Gopez led the hitting of the ceremonial drive, kicking off the four-day event which also features the cream of the ladies crop.

Raymund Sangil mixed four birdies against the same number of bogeys and matched par 72 to tie Joel Opaco, who strung up nines of 36-36 for fifth place. .

After bogeying two of his first three holes, Pagunsan went two-under with three birdies in a nine-hole stretch linking both nines.

But the reed-thin but power-hitting shotmaker tripped on a triple-bogey 7 on the par-4 13th and scrambled for pars the rest of the way to salvage that 35-38 card. He shared seventh with Jerome Malaga (37-36), Erwin Vinluan (37-36), Boboy Jaraula (38-35), Ferdinand Aunzo (35-38), Choi Ming Gyu (39-34) and Mario Labajo (36-37).

Bernis, who thwarted Pagunsan's final-round rally to cop the crown last year, had a roller-coaster round of 37-38 marred by seven bogeys.

Meanwhile, reigning RP Ladies Open champion Jayvie Agojo tries to reassert her mastery over the same field she dominated last year as she opens her title-retention bid in the ladies side of the event which starts today.

Record cast tees off today in Corp. Cup

BAGUIO—The overflow entry list made former Philippine Sports Commission chair Cecil Hechanova smile. And probably the city that is still recovering from a tourism jolt.

The Philippine Corporate Cup golf championship gets under way at the Camp John Hay Golf Club here today with 240 golfers from as far as the United States and South Korea joining the two-day hunt for honors.

The record number of teams highlights the turnover of management for this 17th edition of the annual tournament from the Philippine Corporate Cup Foundation, Inc., which Hechanova established, to the Club Leisure Corp.

"I'm turning over the Corporate Cup to a hard-working group with the full trust and confidence that they would make it bigger and bigger in the coming years," said Hechanova. "Just looking at the number of teams they've brought to Baguio, I couldn't be happier with the way they will start."

Hechanova joined Camp John Hay board chair Bob Sobrepeña, Baguio Mayor Braulio Yaranon and Philippine Military Academy superintendent Maj. Gen. Cristolito Balaoing in hitting the ceremonial drives that preceded the cocktails hosted by Le Chef yesterday.

Sobrepeña said the Corporate Cup is destined to gain a popularity as wide as the annual Fil-Am which CJH also hosts.

"The event catering to executives and corporate gives it a big potential," Sobrepeña said. "We had to limit the number of participants this year and we'll see how we can take in more next year."

Sponsors of the tournament are Smart Gold as presenter as well as Camp John Hay Golf Club, Camp John Hay Manor, Camp John Hay Dev't Co. and Wilson, which is providing the hole-in-one prize.

At stake are trophies and other prizes for the top two finishers in Group I among those with average handicap indeces of 5-9.9, Group II for 10-13.99, Group III for 14-18.99 and Group IV for 19 and above. There will be a separate competition for seniors aged 55 years and above.

The overall individual champions and individual winners per group as well as the top three senior teams and top three senior individuals will also win trophies.

More than P100,000 worth of raffle prizes will be given away in tomorrow's awards ceremony at the CAP Convention Center.

Thirdy Escaño captains Camp John Hay Manor after leading Manila Southwoods to a thrilling victory in the PAL Interclub last week in Bacolod.

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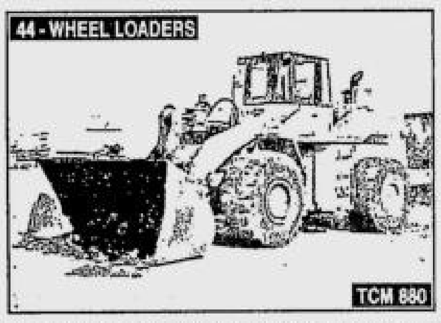

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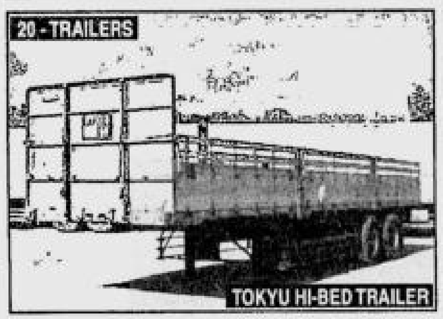

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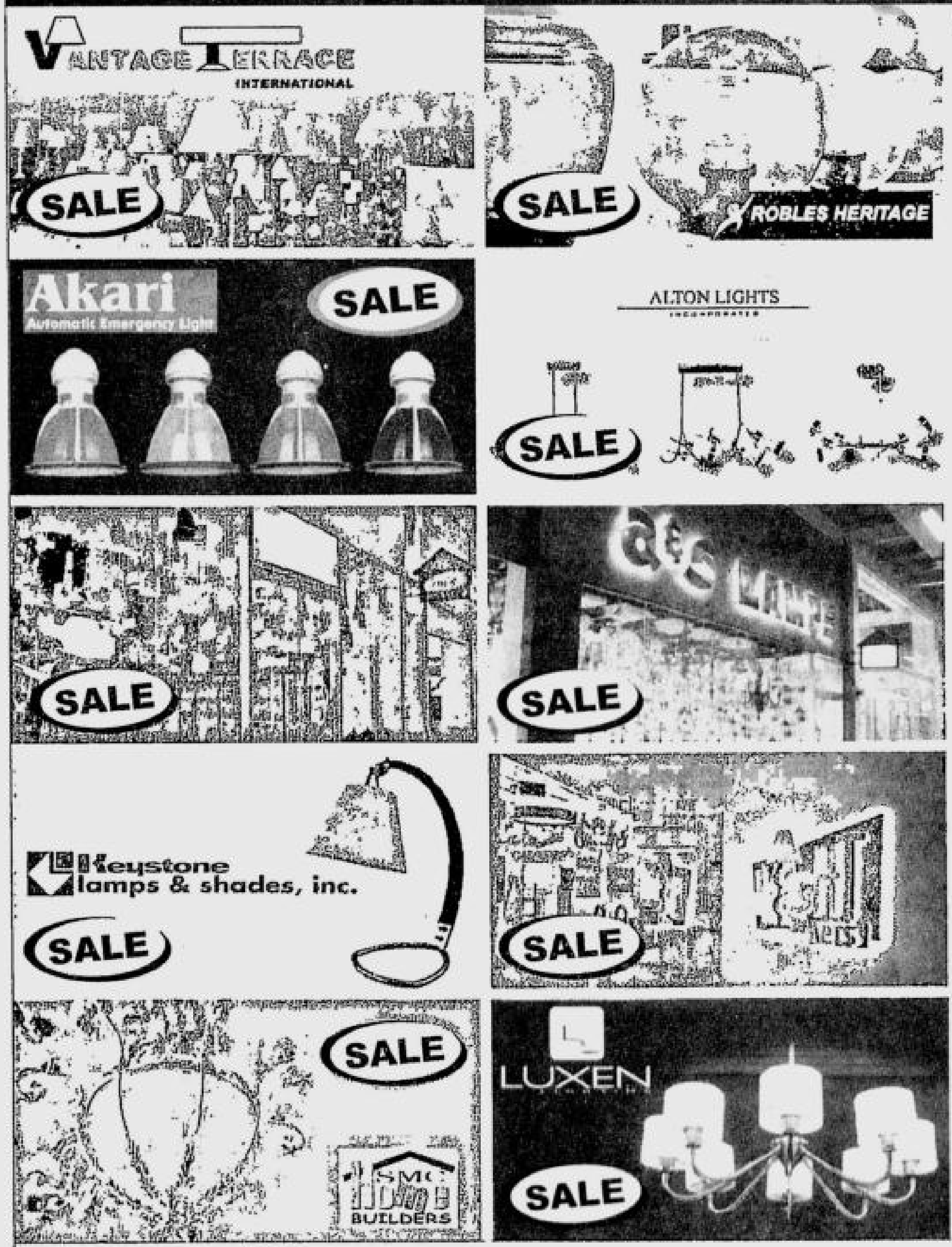

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WHAT'S INSIDE
- Updates on 'Idol' winners / A2-2
- Last take on 'Million Dollar Baby' / A2-3

True-life miracles in 'Birhen of Manaoag'

TRUE ACCOUNTS of the Virgin of Manaoag's miracles abound. Three of these tales have found their way to cinema via "Birhen ng Manaoag," directed by Ben Yalung and opening today in local theaters.

Here are three more, among the many other stories that the filmmakers chose from.

Petals of Marian images

Carmelo, from Bulacan, is a devout Marian, zipping to and from shrines and pilgrimage sites throughout the country.

His devotion began a few years ago, on his first visit to the Virgin of Manaoag shrine in Pangasinan. A woman he didn't know gave him a bouquet of fresh roses.

"Take these," said the woman, "They blossomed from the ground where the Blessed Mother stood."

On his way back home, he noticed that images of the Blessed Mary were etched in each of the petals.

To this day, Carmelo believes the incident was a miracle.

BIRHEN/ A2-6

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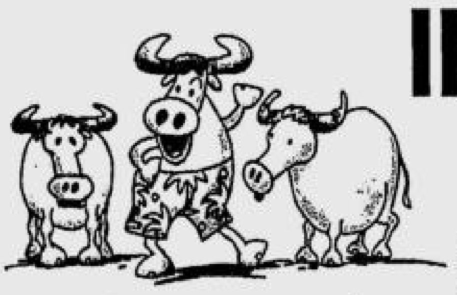

Read it every Sunday
with the
Philippine Daily Inquirer.
JOB Market

OPENING TODAY

Birhen ng Manaoag

Directed by Ben "M7" Yalung
Stars Eddie Garcia, Albert Martinez, Joyce Jimenez, Cherry Pie Picache

A TRILOGY based on true accounts of devotees to the miraculous Virgin of Manaoag in Pangasinan. Martinez plays husband to cancer-stricken Jimenez. Bianca King is the pregnant teenage daughter of Picache. Jodi Santamaria seeks the truth about the Virgin of Manaoag and its miracles as an investigative journalist. Marco Alcaraz is a seminarian who becomes bitter and unbelieving after his mother dies, while Garcia is the parish priest of Manaoag.

Hollywood actor and director Mel Gibson took a risk with his controversial "The Passion of the Christ," last year's box-office hit in spite of the gore and strange dialogue.

Will Yalung's movie be just as miraculous at the box office? Only God knows. Two reasons to watch the movie: Ina Feleo, who plays the Virgin Mary. She's not only beautiful; her parents are Johnny Delgado and Laurice Guillen. Wonder if she can act?

Then there's Fil-Am actor and hunk Matthew Hunt, who portrays Jesus Christ. He has appeared in a number of Hollywood movies shot here, like "Brokedown Palace" and "Noriega."

Cursed

Directed by Wes Craven
Stars Christina Ricci, Joshua Jackson, Jesse Eisenberg, Judy Greer, Scott Baio

ORPHANED siblings Jimmy (Jesse Eisenberg) and Ellie (Christina Ricci) get into a car accident while driving home late one night. A mysterious beast attacks them, and in the following weeks, they both develop eerie powers, waking up in strange places, and seeing strange marks on their bodies.

Jesse Hassenger of filmcritic.com wrote: "A few suspenseful sequences jostle against slasher-style monologuing (beware tense speeches recited to the main character as she backs away with fear in her eyes); cracks at Hollywood are overtaken by badly cut fight sequences; some decent performances simply don't have the time to find motivation or detail. We're left observing the uneasy spectacle of a werewolf movie feeding on itself."

The Final Cut

Directed by Omar Naim
Stars Robin Williams, Mira Sorvino, James Caviezel

IN THE FUTURE, a microchip implanted in your brain will record everything you see and hear. When you die, a "cutter" will edit your memories into a two-hour video called a Rememory, for your friends and family to watch. Alan Hakman (Robin Williams),

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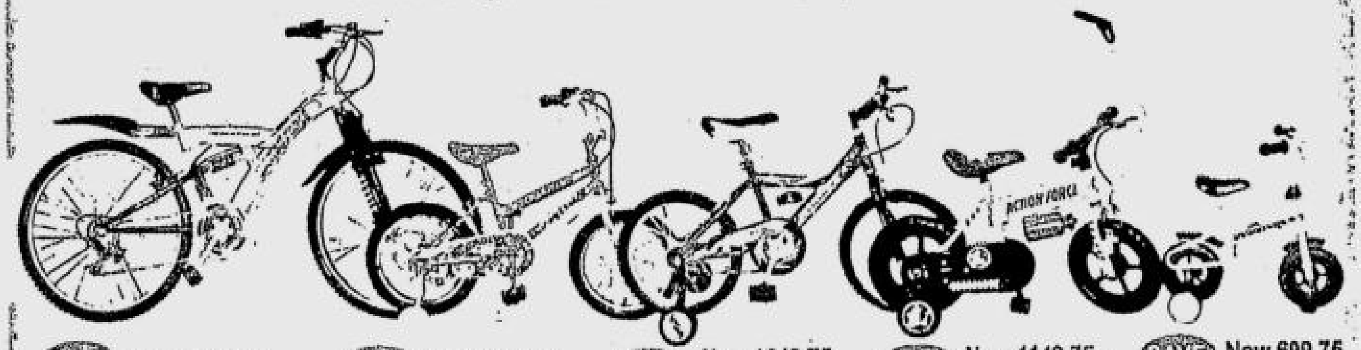
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Updates on 'American Idol' and 'Fame'

VIEWFINDER
Nestor U. Torre

SOME READERS have asked us for updates on the performing careers of 2004 "American Idol" Fil-Am finalists **Jasmine Trias** and **Camile Velasco.** Alas, we don't have much to report. Some weeks ago, we did see Jasmine on cable TV, performing at a sports event in Hawaii with veteran singer **Don Ho.** But that's about it.

All the more reason, therefore, for the two comely Fil-Am singers to shift their career base from the United States to the Philippines. Why don't they try it out here for a couple of years? Definitely, they'll be kept busier performing here than in the US.

And they can do more than just sing. They can act, host TV shows, endorse products, etc. Their exposure on "American Idol" last year has made them popular in these parts, so they should take advantage of the opportunities waiting for them here.

Sure, this is "only" the Philippines, but, as other Fil-Am talents performing here can tell Jasmine and Camile, there are many performing prospects and a lot of money to be made in local showbiz.

Come to think of it, even **Sharon Galvez,** a semi-finalist in this year's tilt (down to the last 44 survivors) could revive her career by performing here. Now that her "AI" exposure has put her back in the public's consciousness, the former **Smokey Mountain** singer can become popular again locally. Sure beats cocktail-waitressing in the States, right?

Incidentally, another US singing search, "Fame," has made another Fil-Am finalist, **Jamisen Tiangco,** a comer in her own right. So, Jamisen could also think of trying her luck here.

She may not have a particularly strong singing voice, but she's a great dancer and also a standout in the looks department. In fact, one of the male jurors of "Fame" was so smitten with her that he "jokingly" asked her to marry him, in full view of millions of viewers!

Another reader wants to know the latest about 2004 "AI" champion **Fantasia Barrino.** Well, her recording career is doing just fine, and she's performing all over the US, so her ascent to the top clearly remains on its upward trajectory.

Final question: Who's the most successful "AI" winner ever? At this point, it'll still have to be the first champion, **Kelly Clarkson.** But Fantasia could catch up with her soon.

As for the 2003 winner, **Ruben Studdard,** he's also busy performing. But his runner-up, **Clay Aiken,** is getting bigger talent fees than he is, because Clay has more "face value" and, admit it, more star quality.

By the way, star quality seems to be this year's tilt best suit. The majority of the 2005 competition's finalists not only sing well, they look really good, too.

So, expect even more prospective stars to emerge from this year's "American Idol," including some talents who will end up out of the winners' circle, but could make it in show business just the same. Talent *will* out!

'Boso'

VIVA Films joins the digital revolution with "Boso," a dark comedy written and directed by **Jon Red.** It is the first Viva production shot entirely on mini-digital video.

The film is about peeping Tom (**Jeffrey Quizon**) who is instantly smitten by a young married woman (**Katya Santos**) whom he espies through his peep hole. Other actors include **Bembol Roco, Joel Torre, Gwen Garci, Ella V.** and **Jaycee Parker.**

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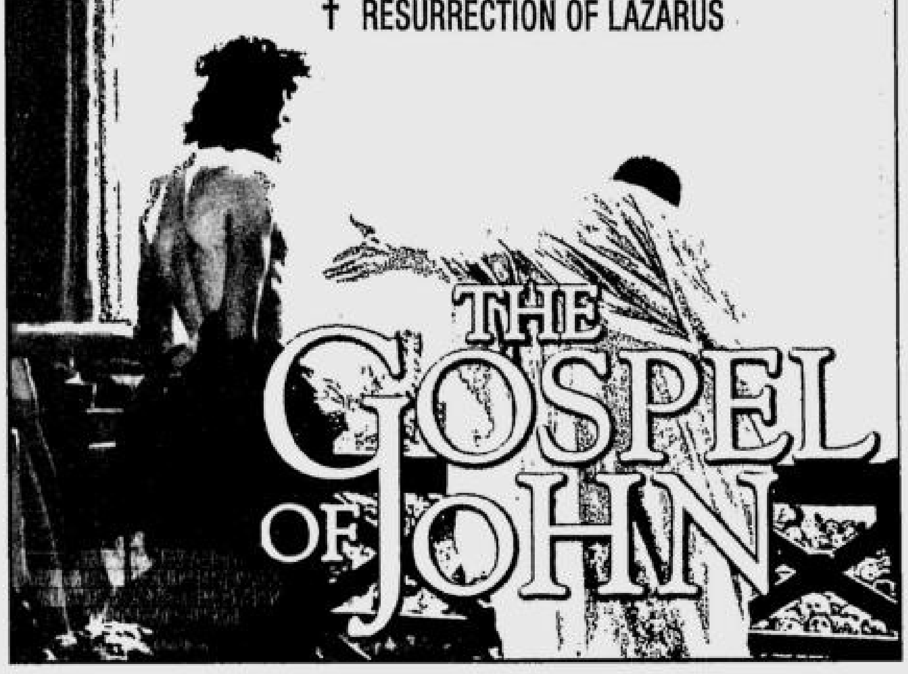

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2 (SDDS) HOSTAGE
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6 GOLD (SDDS) HITCH
7 GOLD (DOLBY) MASK-2 SON OF THE MASK
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4 (DTS)

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4 NIGHT JOB
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MORGAN Freeman (left) and Hilary Swank

An exhausting experience hard to classify

By Ruben M. Cruz Jr.
Contributor

REVIEW

OSCAR Best Picture winner "Million Dollar Baby" at first seems to build on a fairly standard sports melodrama story line—bonding between fighter and trainer, a lot of hard training all on the way to that big fight in the end. But soon enough, it becomes clear that the movie has greater ambitions than drawing out old "Rocky" fans.

To watch this movie is to swing across a field of raw emotions. It is an exhausting experience, replete with laughter and tears, triumph and tragedy. I stepped out of the theater feeling all beat-up.

It is too particular to be conveniently classified. It's not just a fight movie, although the boxing scenes are shown in gritty, realistic detail, with the sound of punches landing on flesh giving audiences the impression that they're right next to the ring with the fighters.

There are only three principal characters, yet "Million Dollar Baby" feels like a "big" film because it explores the landscape of the soul. There's scarcely a moment in the movie that isn't laced by intimations of fate and mortality.

I have not read the book, "Rope Burns: Stories from the Corner" by 70-year-old fight manager Jerry Boyd. The movie is based on one of the short stories in it. If the film adaptation is any indication, it must be some collection!

Demons

Every character in this movie—Maggie Fitzgerald (Hilary Swank), Frankie Dunn (Clint Eastwood) and Scrap (Morgan Freeman)—has his/her own demons to wrestle. It is perhaps these unresolved pains that give their friendship all the depth it needs.

Emotionally, "Million Dollar Baby" finds the perfect pitch. There's no overacting or overt audience manipulation. We empathize with the characters but there's never a feeling that we're being tricked into a particular desired response.

Eastwood, who also directed the movie and did the musical score; screenwriter Paul Haggis and cinematographer Tom Stern did a good job of revealing details in, and capturing the nuances of, small moments. That is to say, whether it's just a studied glance, images in silhouette, or a conversation about holes in socks. The movie favors back lighting, which adds a pervading feeling of dread and disconnection to even the most conventional moments.

Time has been good to Eastwood. Even with features all weathered, the camera still flatters him. There's no ego at work in his performance, no demand to be recognized. Here he is simply Frankie Dunn. At 74, he reveals the sensitivity and artistry of a director on a continuous creative high, aware of his abilities and unafraid to unleash them onscreen.

Searing

Eastwood shares the movie's emotional core with Swank, who must truly be the best actress of her generation. Swank imbues Maggie with furious honesty, and much of her acting comes in subtle expression changes and body language.

At once searing and somber, "Million Dollar Baby" gets at a fundamental truth about all life being a struggle between the choices we make to determine our destiny, and fate itself, which seems to determine those very choices. Be that as it may, it's always a good fight.

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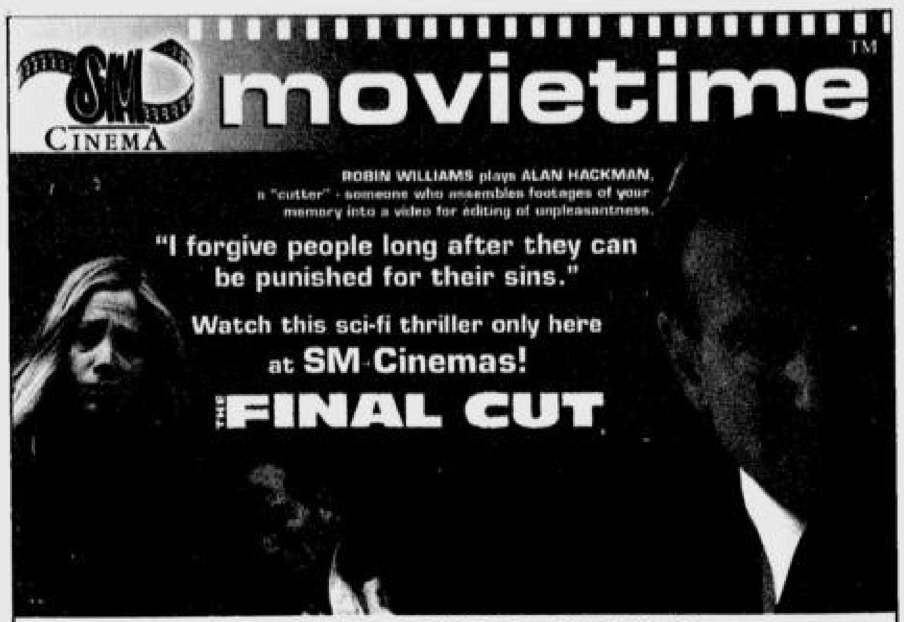
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3 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
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2 MILLION DOLLAR BABY	2 HITCH	2 LEMONY SNICKET'S	6 HITCH	GUARANTEED SEATS 2 HITCH 1:20, 3:50, 6:20, 8:50, 11:20	2 ALFIE
3 CONSTANTINE	3 CONSTANTINE	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 MILLION DOLLAR BABY 2:00, 4:50, 7:40, 10:30	7 THE AVIATOR	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 LEMONY SNICKET'S 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10, 11:30	3 CONSTANTINE
4 LEMONY SNICKET'S	4 MILLION DOLLAR BABY	4 BUNSHINBA		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 CONSTANTINE 1:50, 4:15, 6:40, 9:15, 11:30	4 SON OF THE MASK
5 THE AVIATOR				GUARANTEED SEATS 5 THE AVIATOR 1:45, 5:00, 8:15, 11:30	5

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 MILLION DOLLAR BABY 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00
2 HITCH 12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00

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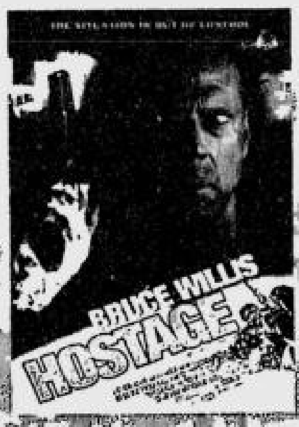
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FROM left, Epi, Eric, Dolphy a

Why
can'
'Quiz

By Jocelyn Valle
Contributor

ALL BUT one of L
offspring who
tively pursuing
in show business are
Comedy King's new sh
ABS-CBN, "Quizon Ave

Grandson Boy 2 Quizon ca
uncles Eric, Jeffrey and Vando
cast because he has a cont
GMA 7, explained Dolphy. B
mainstay of the Kapuso netw
comedy program, "Bubble Ga

There's also conflict on the
ing front. Dolphy endorses Sm
munications' Talk 'N Text; Boy
for Smart's fierce rival, Globe

Instead of feeling disappoi
phy is happy to note that Boy
is flourishing. Boy 2 used to
cast of his grandfather's sitcom
Along Da Riles," on ABS-CBN
told entertainment writers
"He sought my permission w
cided to move to Channel 7. I
my blessing. I told him that
right decision."

In "Quizon Avenue," Dol
name Rodolfo V. Quizon—an
ic, Jeffrey and Vandolph are
by newcomers Jenny Hernan
wang, Ya Chang and Kitkat.
long-time colleague, Al Quin
The show is touted to be the
tion of Dolphy's acclaime
Artista."

"Quizon Avenue" premie
on Saturday. The erstwhile Jo
Puruntong and Kevin Kos
said a gag show such as this w
harder to do than a sitcom.
may be easier if we only do ga
but we also have musical nu
bers that require rehearsals
have no fixed character
'Quizon Avenue'; instead
have many roles to play."

Dolphy has worked ma
times with Vandolph, his s
with actress Alma Moreno. Va
dolph joined the biz as a chub
tot in the late '80s. Eric's fi
movie two decades ago was a
with his dad but he quick
made a name for himself a
versatile actor and promising
rector.

Eric and Jeffrey, or Epi, w
in the Gil Portes movie, "Mar
va," with their dad. They w
all named "Best Actress" in t
Brussels Film Festival two ye
ago.

The Comedy King observ
that three younger Quizons h
acting styles similar to his, es
cially when playing gay rol
Dolphy himself is unforgettal
in movies like "Jack and Ji
"Facifica Falayfay" and "Ta
Kong Nanay."

He said he finds Epi's st
closest to his, but he can't s
which one makes him lau
loudest. *"Hindi naman a
palatawa,"* he pointed out. "
when I start laughing, I just ca
stop."

Dolphy admitted being th
oughly professional when
comes to his work, but said
was also very protective of
kids when they're working
gether. "When people ask
which one I love more—
family or my work—I always s
it's my work because if I d
love my work, how am I going
feed my family? Loving y
work also means loving y
family."

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nd Vandolph

Boy 2
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Dolphy's
, directs.
resurrec-
"Buhay

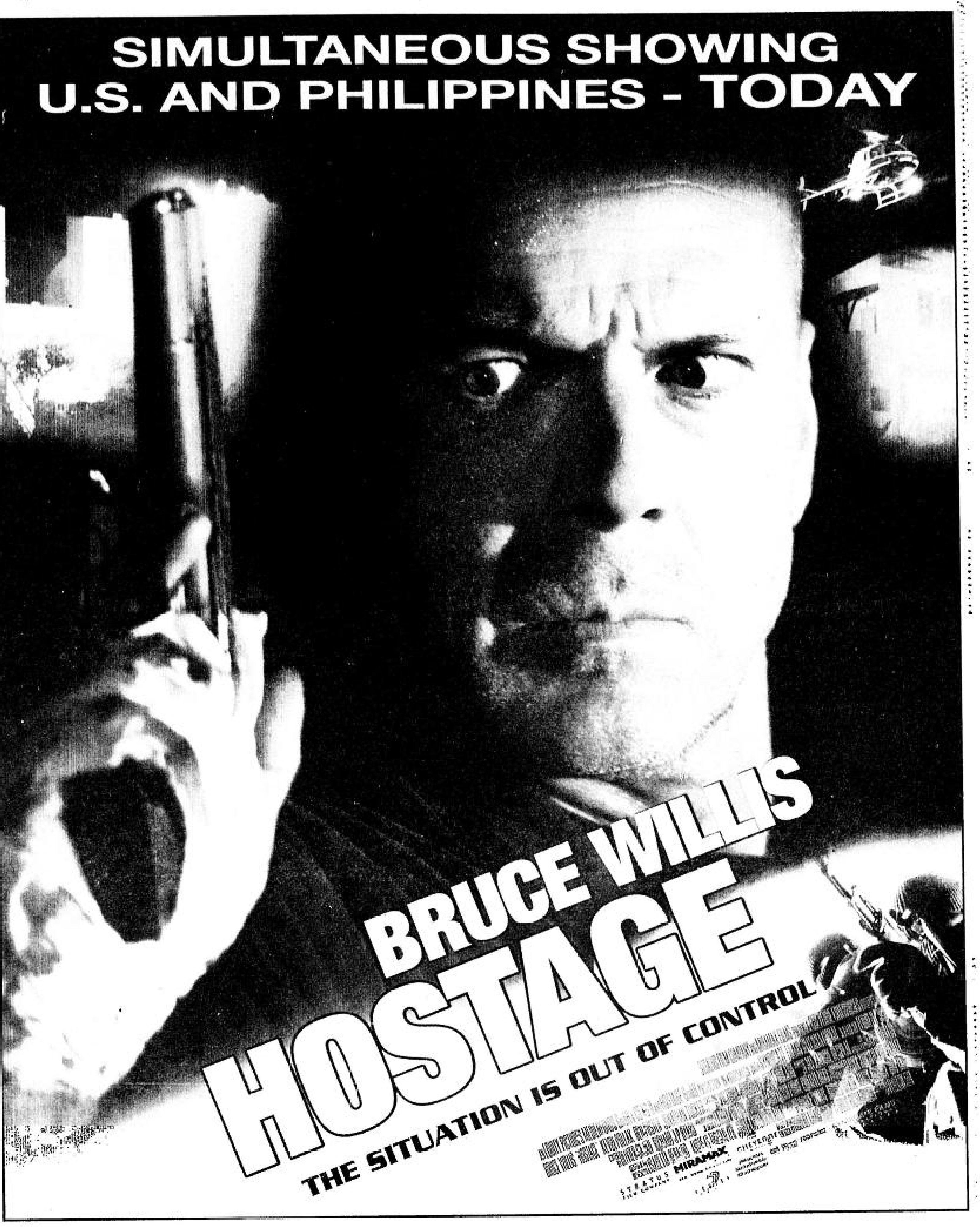
A veteran of 60 years in show business, he said he would sometimes got nervous watching his kids perform "when they're not doing it right." Fortunately, he said, they make him proud most of the time. He declined to play pundit on the future of his three sons' careers, apart from saying: "The one who'll love his work will stay long in the business. I always tell them to be professional. It's great to work with someone who's liked by everybody."

Do all Quizons have a sense of humor? "*Puro kalog 'yan* (They're all wacky)," he replied, laughing. "[Even] the quiet ones [are] still funny. There's no dull moment when we get together. I'm the only one who's quiet." The girls are the shiest, he added.

Dolphy has 18 children from various relationships. "Salud (Sahlee) tried show business for a while but she was just so shy," he said. "You can't be shy in this kind of work. You have to have a thick face."

He said his daughter Zia, with current partner Zsa Zsa Padilla, had the interest but that her school restricted her from pursuing it. The father is concerned: "I find [the school's attitude] alarming. *Parang ang dumi-dumi ng pag-aartista* (It's like show biz is so dirty)."

Dolphy said Zsa Zsa would definitely guest star on "Quizon Avenue," though not in the near future. He denied reports of their forthcoming wedding. "Not yet," he said. "*Magtrabaho muna tayo; gumawa muna tayo ng pera* (Let's work and make money first."


SIMULTANEOUS SHOWING
U.S. AND PHILIPPINES - TODAY
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HOSTAGE
THE SITUATION IS OUT OF CONTROL
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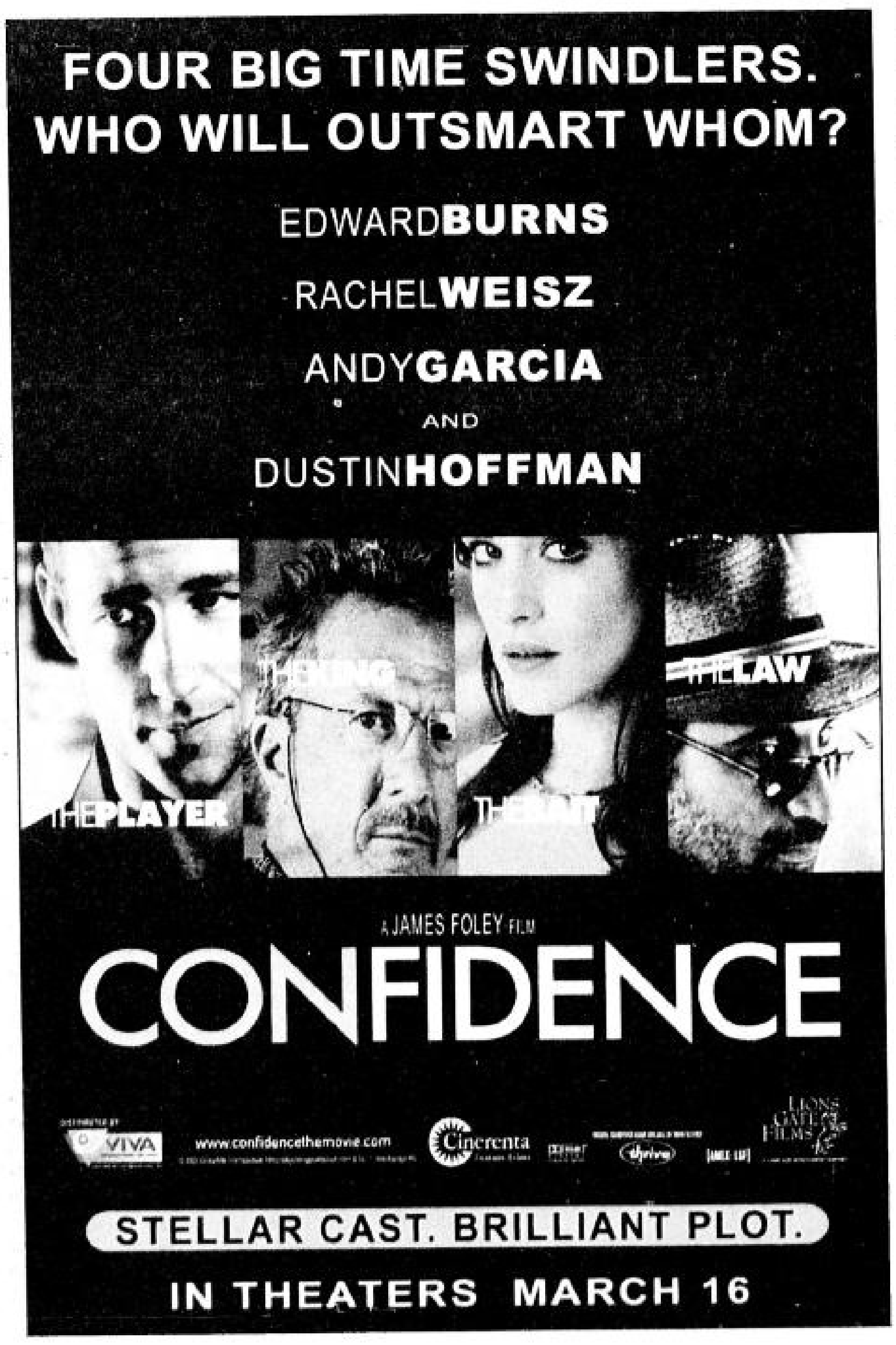
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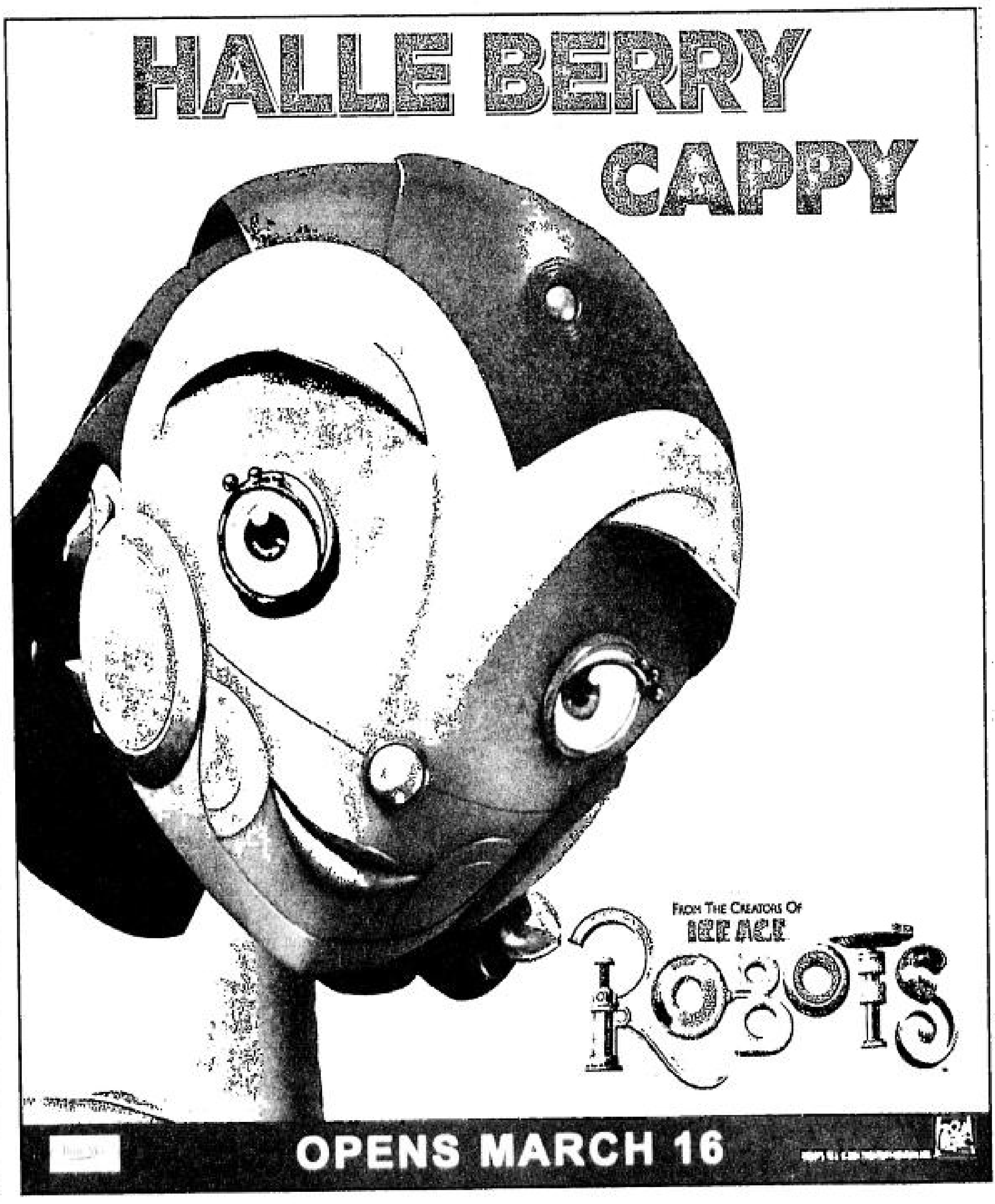
HALLE BERRY
CAPPY
FROM THE CREATORS OF
ICE AGE
ROBOTS
OPENS MARCH 16

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‘Pacifier’ is US’ happy movie of choice this week

LOS ANGELES—Vin Diesel’s comedy "The Pacifier" made $30.2 million on its opening weekend to rank as top-grossing movie in the United States.

Said Paul Dergarabedian, president of Exhibitor Relations Co., which tracks box-office figures: "People like to see a fish-out-of-water story—an action star in a very unexpected role."

Estimated ticket sales at North American theaters:

1) "The Pacifier," $30.2M; 2) "Be Cool," $23.5M; 3) "Hitch," $12.5M; 4) "Diary of a Mad Black Woman," $12M; 5) "Million Dollar Baby," $8.5M; 6) "Constantine," $6M; 7) "Cursed," $3.9M; 8) "Man of the House," $3.5M; 9) "Because of Winn-Dixie," $3.4M; 10) "The Jacket," $2.7M *AP*

VIN DIESEL plays an ex-Navy SEAL, who’s now a babysitter.

Birhen...

From page A2-1

A complete recovery

Cancer-stricken Fr. Miguel, a well-loved parish priest from a Pampanga town, was told he had little time left. A group of relatives, close friends and associates brought him to Manaoag.

The priest had been so weakened by months of chemotherapy sessions and was wheelchair-bound. But after a few moments of deep, prayerful silence before the Virgin’s image, Fr. Miguel’s face lit up.

As the group made their way back home, the priest said: "*Napakagaan ng pakiramdam ko* (I feel so much better)." And he showed it, too.

After a few months, the priest’s physician found no more trace of the cancer. Was the prognosis on Fr. Miguel’s condition a mistake? Or was his faith rewarded with a miracle?

Rescued

By the turn of the century, Manaoag had become a town thriving with lively commerce.

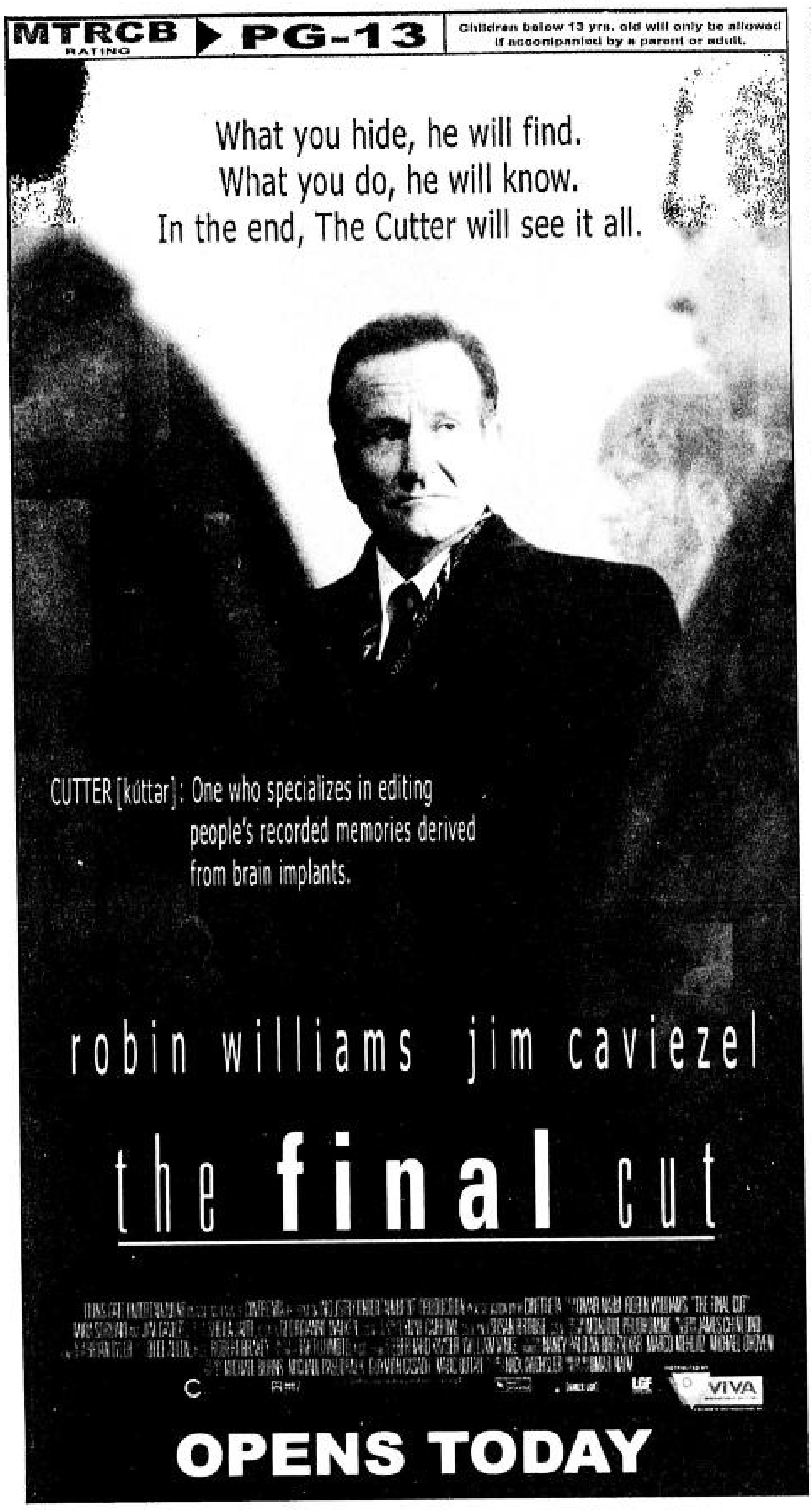
Fishermen cast their nets in the waters near the coast. Documented accounts tell of a fisherman and his wife whose boat tipped over when huge waves engulfed it.

The man tried to save his wife, but he was no match to the strong current. She was going down fast.

Suddenly, a ray of light was seen just above the water, and the wife rose to the surface where, she would recount later, she was met by a woman in white who stood only inches above the waves, hands outstretched.

She firmly believes to this day that she was delivered to safety by the Virgin of Manaoag herself.

"Miracles do happen," says Yalung. "This is what we hope to share with everybody through this movie."



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CUTTER [kŭttər]: One who specializes in editing people’s recorded memories derived from brain implants.
robin williams jim caviezel
the final cut
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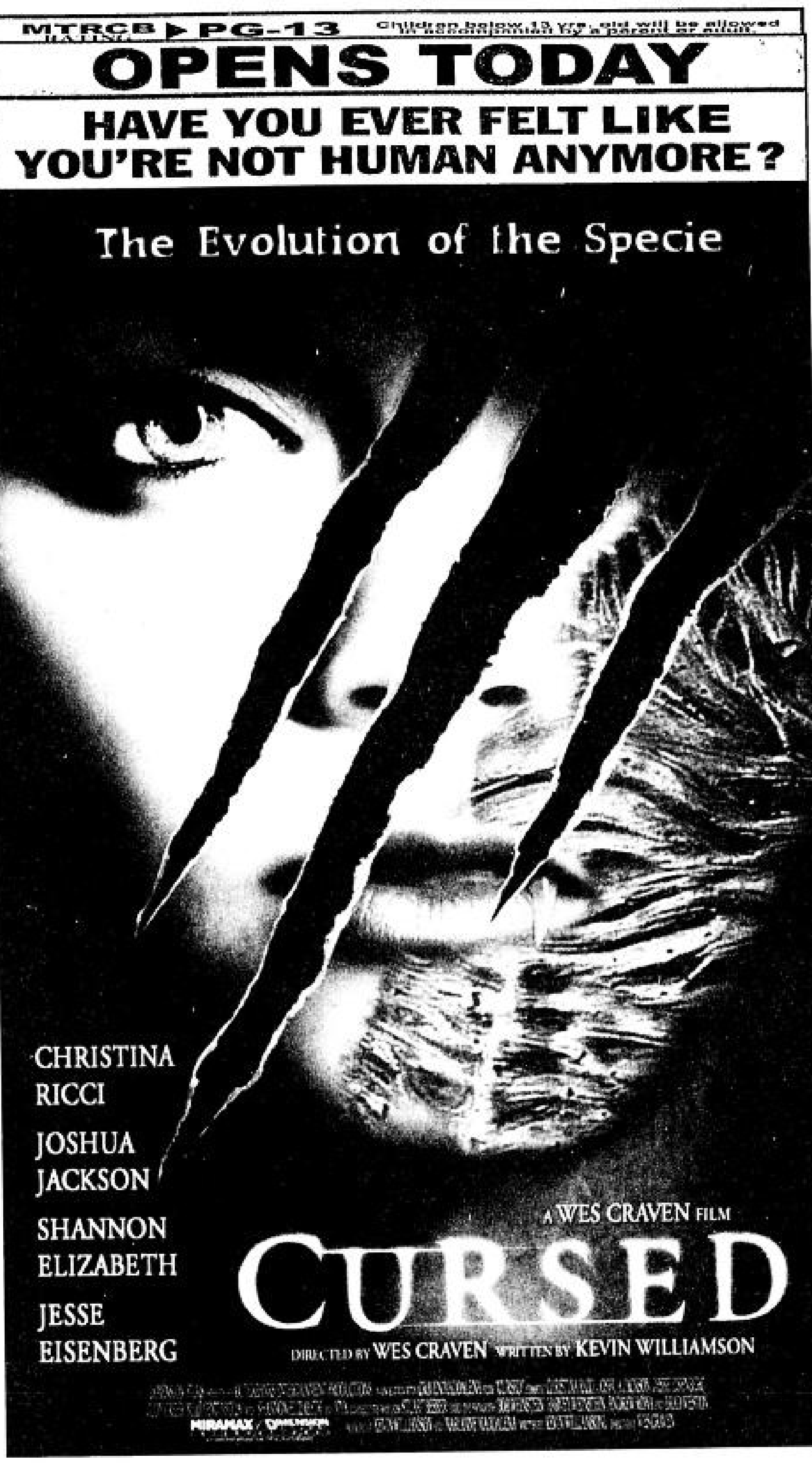

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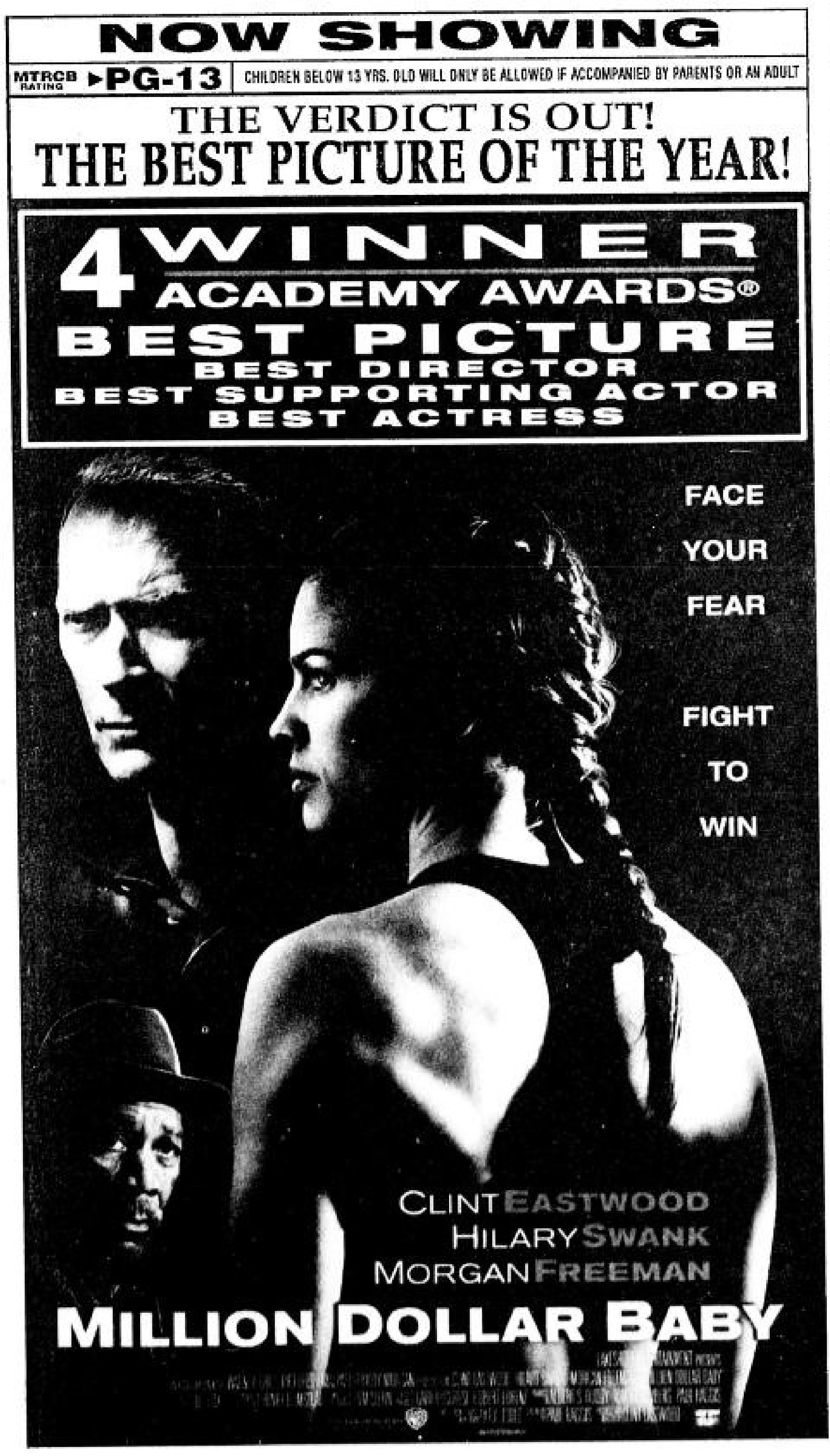

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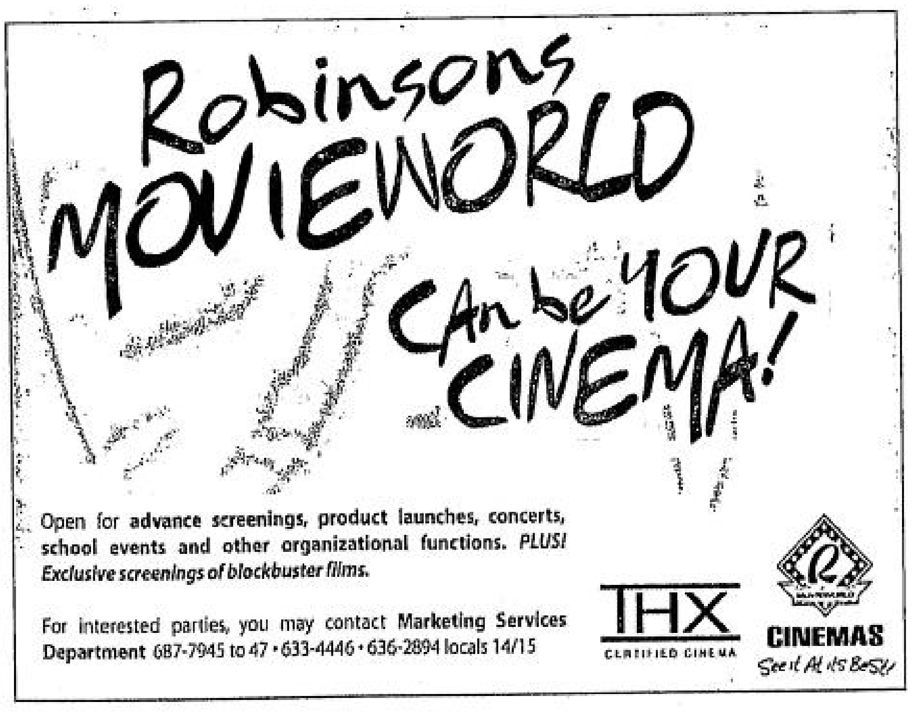

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Fil-Am actor on Asians cast in 'Constantine'

By Ruben V. Nepales
LA Correspondent

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

LOS ANGELES—Filipino-American actor Abe Pagtama recalls the making of the opening exorcism scene in "Constantine" with Keanu Reeves and fellow Pinoy Johanna Trias.

In the background of that scene was Pagtama, one of several Asian-American actors shown helping Reeves carry a mirror. "The shoot itself was easy except [that] mirror was made of real cast iron, and very heavy. Working with Keanu was fun. He was very concerned about the actors. Director (Francis) Lawrence was easy to work with. It didn't seem like work at all."

To illustrate, Pagtama recounted: "He gave Johanna a gift certificate for $400 worth of massage service, because he thought her scene was very physical."

Trias, as the possessed girl, hisses, "*Papatayin natin sila* (We will kill them)," startling, and thrilling, Fil-Am moviegoers here.

Another Filipino-actor, John Wesly, appears in the same scene, according to Pagtama. The rest are Asian-American thespians, including Suzanne Whang, who plays Trias' Filipina.

Ironically, the presence of Filipino-American actors in a film like "Constantine," only serves as a reminder of the paucity of roles for minority performers in Hollywood.

Pagtama, was born in Hawaii but grew up in Kidapawan, Cotabato. He has decided to be very patient about his work as an actor in the US: "Screenwriters don't usually write about us so we don't get cast a lot in Hollywood."

So what keeps him going?

"It's in my blood. It's fun, and sometimes you get paid well."

We asked Pagtama what, for him, was the most frustrating part of being an actor trying to make it in Hollywood.

"I can't make a living," he said. "I can't pay my bills."

Pagtama should be a superstar by now, if it were only based on the number of people who have watched him. He played a convenience store owner in a Pepsi commercial created for last year's Super Bowl, which was seen by over 130 million TV viewers. The commercial was also shown at the hugely popular 2004 Academy Awards telecast.

Pagtama is realistic about his chances: "I don't even think of becoming a big star. I just do it because it's fun. For me, being an actor means I can be anyone for a day or two."

In an earlier interview, Lawrence and Reeves talked about casting Trias and Pagtama.

Lawrence told INQUIRER Entertainment: "Casting for the possessed girl in the opening scene is an interesting and strange story. In my office, we would have these girls come in and they would lie down on the floor and pretend that they're possessed. They would be flopping around and everybody downstairs would go, 'Oh, they're casting for the possessed girl again.'

"I really liked the way this one girl, Johanna Trias, looked, but she couldn't make it to LA because she was in New York. So she auditioned on tape. She did this 20-minute long tape of herself as this possessed girl in her bed in her hotel room in New York. I said, 'Oh, this girl's great.' So we brought her in."

He further explained why he cast Fil-Am thespians like Trias and Pagtama: "I was trying to capture the ethnicity of Los Angeles. Abe [Pagtama] was [also] fantastic."

Reeves agreed with the director completely on that score: "Los Angeles' diversity and ethnicity make it quite a remarkable place."

OPENING TODAY

From page A2-1

edits the memories of another cutter and uncovers a disturbing piece of his own past which leads him to question life.

Roger Ebert in his Oct. 15, 2004 review for the Chicago Sun-Times wrote: "There is another Robin Williams, a lonely recluse hiding inside the extrovert. Williams is able to channel this furtive, secretive persona for roles that are far removed from Mork, Mrs. Doubtfire and Aladdin's Genie… (He) brings this oddball outsider to a kind of perfection in Omar Naim's 'The Final Cut,' a moody science fiction drama . . . It's been said that inside every comedian is a sad man refusing to weep. Williams has extraordinary success in channeling this other person. How strange that the same actor can play some of the most uninhibited of all characters, and some of the most morose."

Hostage

Directed by Florent Emilio Siri
Stars Bruce Willis, Kevin Pollak, Jonathan Tucker

DEVASTATED by a failed hostage situation which resulted in the deaths of a young mother and her child, LAPD negotiator Jeff Talley (Bruce Willis) leaves Los Angeles for a no-profile job as chief of police in Bristo Camino, a small town in Ventura County. He soon finds himself in a movie like "Die Hard" but this has a different plot, of course. As usual, he is forced to resume the command he abandoned and events evolve into a terrifying hostage situation.

Paul Arendt of bbc.co.uk wrote this Feb. 22 review: "Bruce Willis has had a patchy career since he traded in his action movie vest for a pair of serious drama trousers. He's proved himself a capable, quirky actor, but 'Hostage' will cheer anyone who misses bad old Brucie, with his snarling sincerity and gleaming deltoids. He plays a police negotiator, a role that allows him to shoot folks, strip to his undies and cry like a baby, all in the same film. Talk about value for money."

Spanglish

Directed by James L. Brooks
Stars Adam Sandler, Paz Vega, Téa Leoni, Cloris Leachman

CULTURES collide as Flor (Paz Vega), a beautiful Mexican woman, and her 12-year-old daughter move in with an affluent Los Angeles family.

Wesley Morris in his Dec. 17, 2004 review in the Boston Globe wrote: "Occasionally, mostly in the early going, 'Spanglish' feels like it might be a tonal disaster. There's too much fidgeting, gawking and stuttering. From a directing standpoint, it lacks the crisp social and occupational rhythms of 'Broadcast News,' the finest comedy ever about work as a window into people's souls. 'Spanglish' is always percolating, but its timing is sometimes off. I felt the same way about 'As Good as It Gets,' but a lot more so. Shtick had replaced the subtlety in Brooks' filmmaking, and the conversations sounded speechy, sometimes preachy. But unlike most American directors, Brooks really rewards an audience's perception."

WARM BED, COLD HEART
Theater, TV and film actor Irma Adlawan plays a middle-aged advertising practitioner pining for a young man in Ellen Ongkeko-Marfil's "Mga Pusang Gala (Stray Cats)." The film also stars Ricky Davao, Alcris Galura, ramp/commercial model Lauren Novero, and Mr. Body Shot Reggie Curley. The movie will close the 15th International Women's Film Festival on Friday, at Cine Adarna (formerly UP Film Center) in Diliman, at 6:30 p.m.

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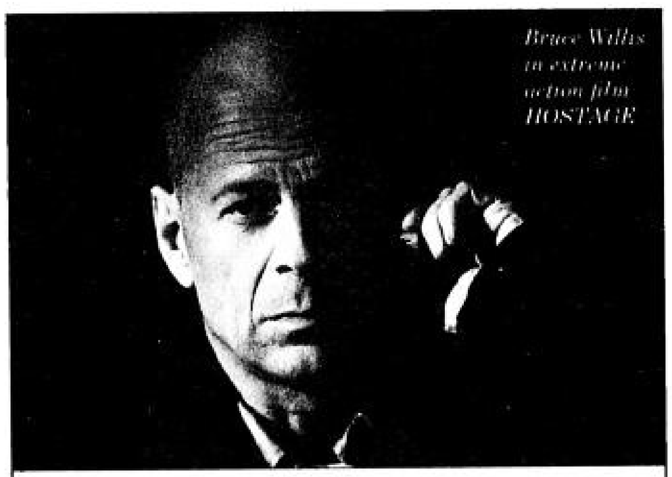


"HOSTAGE" based on the NEW YORK TIMES' #1 BESTSELLER by Robert Crais

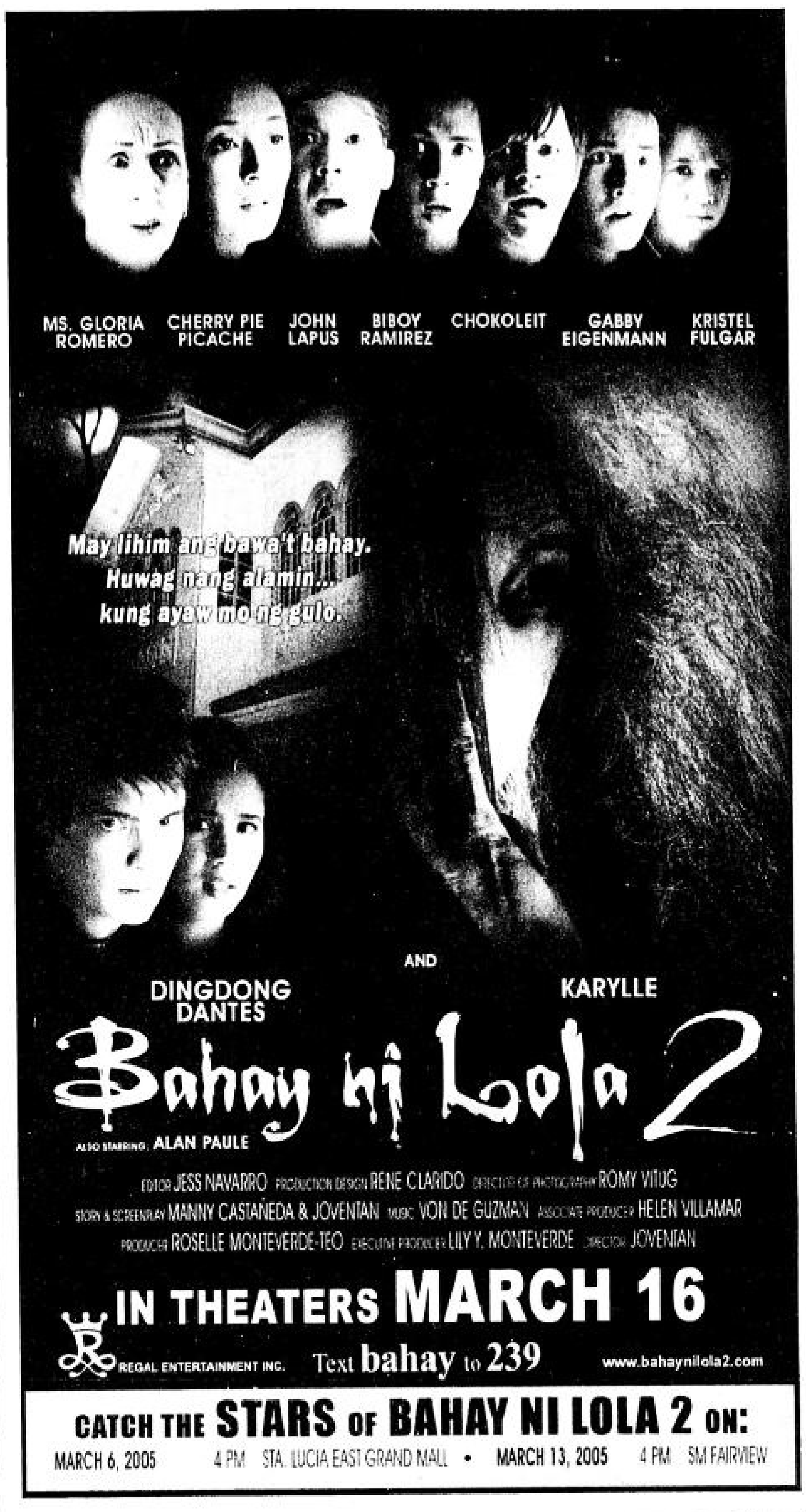
In his English-language debut, French director Florent Siri knocks out a noir film that must rank among the genre's most suspenseful and exciting pics in recent years. **"Hostage,"** adapted by *Doug Richardson* from ***Robert Crais***'s New York Times best-selling novel, is a study in extreme tension. A police officer, once the senior hostage negotiator in L.A. who now settles for a job as police chief in a California hamlet, is beset by conflict. Should he risk the lives of people trapped by a trio of young thugs in order to save his own family who are now hostages themselves, held by a band of hooded, professional and determined criminals to compel the negotiator to enter a building in a cop-surrounded household and leave with a copy of a most important DVD?

Siri wastes no time setting us up for what's to come. A bearded, literally laid-back hostage negotiator for the LAPD, Jeff Talley (**Bruce Willis**), gives a command that haplessly results in the death of two people held by a crazed gunman. Shortly thereafter, he settles into a job supervising a handful of cops in a sleepy California community, certain that what he calls "low- crime Monday" will be followed by low-crime Tuesday, ad infinitum. His bubble is burst when three young punks, seeking to make off with a Cadillac belonging to wealthy accountant Walter Smith (Kevin Pollak), are trapped within a multi-million dollar home (filmed in Topanga Falls, CA) with all the protections of a medieval castle save a moat. His job, saving the lives of the accountant and his two kids, eight-year-old Tommy Smith (Jimmy Bennett) and teen Jennifer (Michelle Horn), becomes more daunting when his own wife, Jane (Serena Scott Thomas) and daughter Amanda (Rumer Willis), are taken hostage themselves by a menacing band of professionals who will free their captives only if Jeff Talley can get them what they want.

It's refreshing to see Bruce Willis doing what he does best. Giving him due credit for his role in the TV series "Moonlighting" and in the failed "Bonfire of the Vanities," Willis of "Pulp Fiction" and "Die Hard" reports for duty, to audience satisfaction. This is the Bruce of "The Siege," Edward Zwick's prescient tale of a New York in which terrorists have set off bombs throughout the city leading to the imposition of martial law, with Willis, acting like a tyrant, clashing with an FBI man and a CIA agent. Major acting kudos go, however, to young Ben Foster as the long- haired psycho Mars Krupcheck, who gets off on watching people slowly die and who, relaxed during the most stressful situation of his life, has only a faint trace of humanity in his tortured soul.

If you believe what the cinema has to tell us, that the best way to redeem yourself from the demons that bedevil you is to thrust yourself into a similar situation, then "Hostage" will confirm your faith. Talley, fighting the ghosts of the two prisoners who went belly-up a decade back, is unwillingly placed into a similar situation. Should he fail, not only will his family and that of a wealthy accountant be history, but his own wife and kid will become statistics themselves. "Hostage" tests a failed cop as he struggles to thrust off his agony. [by HARVEY S. KARTEN, compuserve.com] •

ADVT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MATTHEW HUNT as JESUS CHRIST   INA FELEO as the BLESSED VIRGIN
JODI SANTAMARIA   MARCO ALCARAZ
Birhen ng MANAOAG
a film by BEN [illegible] YALUNG
ALICIA ALONZO   NYDIA MERCADO   TJ ORTIZ   [illegible]   TONY MABESA   DINKY DOO
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Talk of Entrepreneurship Rings Around Biñan

SMART visits Saint Michael's College of Laguna

Michaeleans pack St. Theodore's Hall for the SEP

SMART recently continued its streak of nationwide entrepreneurial lectures, otherwise known as the SMART Entrepreneurial Program (SEP), and visited two big colleges in BIÒan, Laguna. First ofl was Saint Michael's College of Laguna (SMCL), which prides itself as being Laguna's first deregulated school. With close to 700 Michaleans packing St. Theodore's Hall last January 27th, Dean Vic Manabat kicked off the program with an inspirational message. The talks and product demonstrations immediately followed, given by Ms. Gula Goduco (Director – Institute for Career Opportunities and Programs for Empowerment), Mr. Roy Dalupan (Marketing Assistant – GTG Consultancy Services), Ms. Ma. Judith Desiderio (Entrepreneur – TLRC) and last but not least, Mr. Anthony Estagle and Mr. Manny Bernal of SMART Communications, Inc.

Daisy Mae N. Dangcalan, 20, taking her B.S. in Accountancy and graduating this year shared her own thoughts on entrepreneurship. "After SEP, I plan to look closely into the potential benefits that entrepreneurship can give my life", she said. "Employment would only be considered an initial step to earn money after graduation. I realize now that the real road to financial success can only be achieved if one takes a crack at entrepreneurship on his own."

Accountancy major Daisy Mae at work

Indeed, such precocious insights can only be testament to the high standards of Daisy's college. "The SEP emphasizes what our professors at Saint Michael's College of Laguna have always been saying concerning entrepreneurship. There is a definite set of priorities that one needs to follow in order to survive in the entrepreneurial world", she adds. "Through SEP, the lessons we have learned are emphasized in a dramatic way. It certainly proved that our college professors were not lying when they told us about the benefits of entrepreneurship.

It's not just about the innovations we bring...

It's about the opportunities we provide.

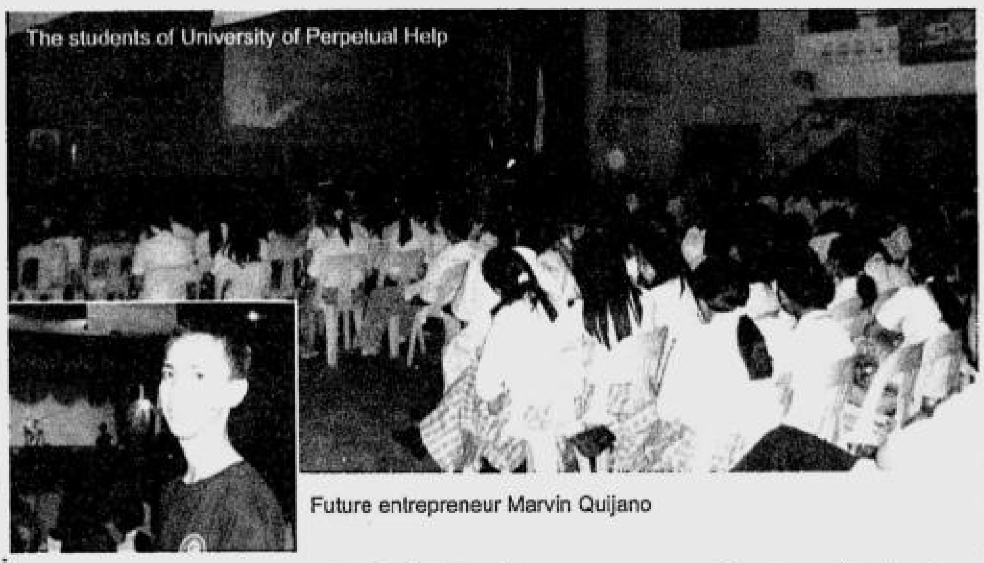
SEP calls in on University of Perpetual Help

Just a fortnight after visiting Saint Michael's College of Laguna, SMART pressed forward and paid neighboring University of Perpetual Help a visit. Staying true to the concept of SEP, which focuses on giving lectures to both prospective graduates and recent college graduates in educational institutions nationwide while informing these individuals of possible entrepreneurial opportunities as SMART dealers or agents, SMART brought with them several speakers from the entrepreneurial and business community for the day's program. Last February 16, 2005, SMART Communications, Inc. won the Anvil Excellence Award for its SMART Entrepreneurial Program (SEP). The SEP is an ongoing series of on-campus lecture tours set to give students better futures by introducing them to crucial lessons in entrepreneurship. SEP has even branched out beyond the academe into NGO and private sectors.

Marvin Quijano, a 21-year old Business Management student graduating this year, was particularly enthusiastic about the SEP. "Since high school, I have studied entrepreneurship", shares Marvin. "I learned that you can't just rely on resources but you also have to look at trends." As it turns out, Marvin wants to open his own restaurant in the future. "I would rather be an entrepreneur than an employee so I can prove that what I learned in college, I can apply in real life", he confidently adds. "The restaurant business is very lucrative. I believe my entrepreneurial instinct and fondness for cooking will pay off one day".

When asked what he thought of the SEP, Marvin said, "I like SMART's approach with the SEP because it shows how open they are as a company. The SEP points out the advantages of entrepreneurship and does it in a way that makes it easy for students to understand. SMART made it very student-friendly."

"SEP gives fresh graduates a viable alternative, a chance at real independence through entrepreneurship. Such is a new graduate's plight in the job market-- only 7% will actually land jobs that pay bare minimum," said the program's main proponent, Mr. Boy Martirez, Head of PCMSD at SMART Communications.


The students of University of Perpetual Help

Future entrepreneur Marvin Quijano

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Wednesday March 9, 2005

SINO ANG BABANGGA SA GINEBRA?

PBA

ABC Iba tayo

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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Showbiz No. 1 (4:25 PM)	Gatekeepers (5:10 PM)	Gundam Seed (5:35 PM)	The Road To Stardom	TV Patrol		Spirits	Krystala	Hiram	Save The Last Dance	Til Death Do Us Part	Yes Yes Show			Insider
NBN	Value Vision	Value Vision		Value Vision	Teledyaryo	Value Vision		Talk Ko 'To		Linya		Teledyaryo		Sinulog Festival				Paco Park Presents	
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	PBA Game-Bol	PBA		PBA		Sentro	PBA					Big News	American Idol		Look Who's Talking	
GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Joyride	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Knock Out	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin		Starstruck	Stairway To Heaven	Nuts Entertainment			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	Scrubs	Everwood		Ally McBeal		For Love Or Money 1		Newswatch Now	Cargo For Truth		
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Lifestyle		On Air Tambayan		Dink	Junior Reyes Report	Bachelors	Celebrity Single	Travel	IBC News Tonite	Breaking Barriers	
Solar		Wire Heat		WWE Confidential		Fantastic Four	Static Shock	Godzilla	Incredible Hulk	Stargate SG1		Wire Ray				Wire Heat		WWE Confidential	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	The Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Nick Mix						Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX		Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Live!		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Knock First	JKX	The Today Show		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News		Will & Grace	Good Morning Miami					Tonight Show With Jay Leno			
Cinema One	Lab Kita, Bilib Ka Ba?			Drama Studio: Mula Sa Puso The Movie				Kahit Kailan			Cinema One Present: Persona	Cine Tonight: Dekada '70 (9:15 PM)				Four Fathers			
Studio 23		Urban MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	Batman Beyond	Project Arms	Wazzup Wazzup	C.S.I.			Las Vegas		News Central	Oprah		The Good Life With Cory Quirino
AXN			The Amazing Race 7				Fear Factor (Season III)	Samurai X	Samurai X	Andromeda (Season III)		The Amazing Race 7		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation		Fear Factor (Season V)		Alias (Season III)	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		American Idol		Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	American Idol		Philly		Third Watch III		Friends	American Idol
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News		World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic		Showroom Asia		Taboo		Dangerous Jobs		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr Brady Barr	Wow		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Showroom Asia	Taboo		
Solar Sports		Copenhagen Masters MotoD Final		RP-Taiwan 9 Ball Chall Bobcat vs. Kuo					ATP Dubai Tennis C'ship '05 SemiFinal				NBA TV Daily	NBA Game Memphis @ Sacramento					NBA Inside Stuff
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Wolfgang Puck's								New York Nick	
HBO	Star Trek Generations				Moto X Kids (4:40 PM)			The Guys (6:05 PM)			Encrypt			Sabrina				Child's Play 2 (11:05PM)	
Star Movies				The Beast (4:15 PM)			The Beast 2 (5:45 PM)				Special Forces (7:20 PM)			Air Rage			Tornado Warning		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Shaman King	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Dexter's Laboratory	Mr. T	Josie And The Pussycats	The Superfriends	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN	Pool/Snooker Mosconi Cup '04		World Tenpin Masters '04		World Tenpin Masters '04		UEFA Champs League '04/05 1st Knock-Out Round				Goals!	Sportscenter Asia	UEFA Champs League '04/05 1st Knock-Out rd.					Soccer FIFA Fever	Sportscenter Asia
Disney Channel	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/Unlakative Bunny	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	Lilo & Stitch/Unlakative Bunny	Going To The Mat			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	America's Funniest Home Video	According To Jim	Land Before Time II: The Great Valley Adventure	
Cinemax		Maverick (3:15 PM)					Grace Of My Heart				Bad To The Bone			Unforgiven				Hercules And The Lost Kingdom	
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	Longshot				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Judging Amy		Hustle		A Time To Remember			Strong Medicine (10:35PM)		Judging Amy (11:25PM)
Discovery Channel		Science Mysteries		Science Frontiers		Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery Showcase		Sumo East And West		Red Leaf Legacy		Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Hour Asia	
MTV Philippines			Hangin Out at MTV		MTV Most Wanted		TRL		Handpicked: Kasabay	MTV Diyes		Wade Robson	Globally Dismissed	Boiling Point	Pimp My Ride	Upgraded	Ludacris Under the Red Light	VH1 Video Collections	
Sports Plus	Arena Football San Jose @ Orlando						Auto Club 500 Highlights		You've Got to See This	NBA Game Orlando @ Cleveland					Bikini Destination	World Poker Tour Episode 8 Parts			
EWTN	Council Of Faith	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Refurbishing The Soul	The Donut Man	Faith Factory	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Saints For The Third Millenium	The Virtues	EWTN Gallery	Mother Angelica Live Classics		One In Their Hearts	Pope Pius XII	Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	St. Catherine Of Sienna	Our Father's Plan	

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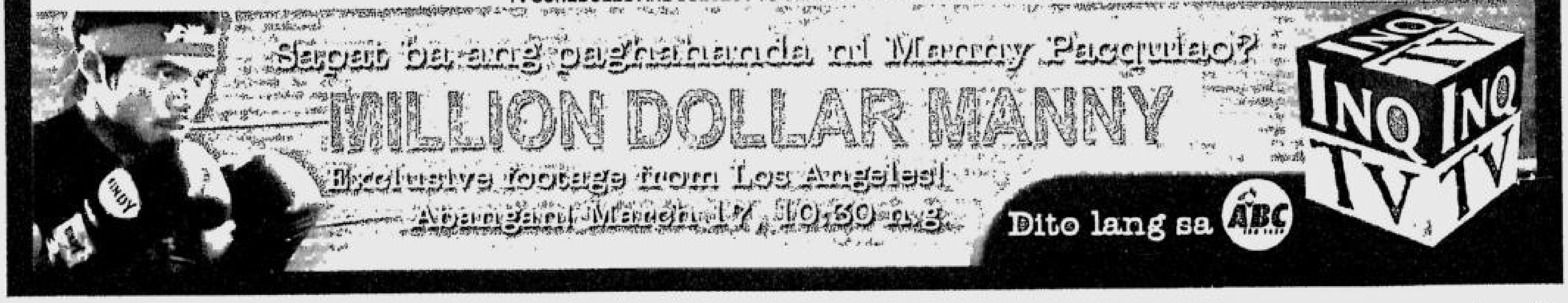
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GMA 7 shelves IPO due to disagreements

By Clarissa S. Batino

GMA Network Inc. shelved its planned initial public offering (IPO) this year due to major disagreements among its existing shareholders.

Sources said the disagreements stemmed from a provision in a proposed shareholders agreement ensuring that existing shareholders would retain control of the company after the IPO.

The network's majority shareholders were worried about losing control of GMA Network to another party that might join forces with the minority shareholder, the sources said.

GMA Network, the country's most profitable broadcast company and chief rival of media leader ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., is owned by three families—those of Felipe Gozon, Gilberto Duavit and Menardo Jimenez Sr.

It had intended to sell as much as 30 percent of its shares to the public in the first semester of the year to raise about P9 billion for the company and its three major shareholders. The amount was based on a market value of about P27 billion to P30 billion.

ATR Kim Eng Securities and Deutsche Bank were tapped as financial advisers for the IPO.

The broadcast firm's IPO was among a slew of big-ticket offerings expected in the local market this year.

But the planned IPO hit a snag after one of the owners—the family of Menardo Jimenez Sr.—refused to sign an agreement that stated that the control of the company would remain with the existing shareholders even after the listing.

The families of Felipe Gozon and Gilberto Duavit, who control the management of the network, have both agreed to sign the shareholders agreement.

The families of Duavit and Jimenez own 35-percent stake each, while the Gozons hold the remaining 30 percent. But since Duavit and Gozon are considered allies, Jimenez is referred to as the minority shareholder.

"A minority shareholder refused to sign the shareholders' agreement. Without the agreement, there is no IPO. The agreement specified that existing owners would remain in control," said a GMA official in an interview.

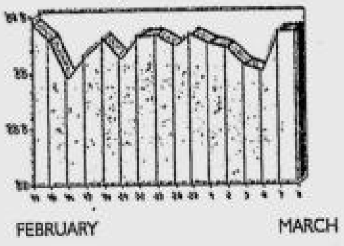
In a statement, GMA said it had "indefinitely postponed its planned IPO this year until certain issues between the majority and minority shareholders

GMA/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 54.635 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., March 8, 2005

¥ 105.01 = $ 1

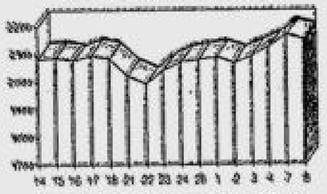
As of 5 p.m., March 8, 2005

GOLD: $435.50-436.00

per ounce Hong Kong, March 8, 2005

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks end lower on profit-taking

SHARES yesterday closed lower as investors took profit, snapping a three-day run that bolstered the bourse's main index to its highest in 5 1/2 years.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index closed 17.04 points, or 0.8 percent, lower at 2,149.06, after rising 1.9 percent higher on Monday to 2,166.10.

The broader All Shares Index rose 3.43 points to 1,227.07 on the strength of Canadian insurer Manulife Financial, which continued to advance. The All Shares Index closed Monday 28.97 points higher at 1,223.64.

The stock market opened 0.3 percent higher on news the country's international reserve was up in February, and the budget deficit in January was just a fifth of the P77.8 billion ceiling for the quarter due to tighter spending and higher tax collection.

The bourse, however, quickly surrendered gains.

"This is just a correction after several days of gain," said Rommel Macapagal, president of Westlink Global Equities.

Traders said investors are apparently li-

STOCKS/ B3

San Miguel files complaint vs Aussie's NatFoods

MELBOURNE—San Miguel Corp. has complained to Australia's takeover regulator about a rival A$1.84-billion ($1.45 billion) bid for dairy company National Foods Ltd. by New Zealand's Fonterra.

San Miguel, which has offered A$1.75 billion for the dairy firm, said there had been inadequate disclosure about a possible joint venture between a Fonterra-controlled National Foods, French dairy company Sodima SAS and its unit Yoplait SAS if Fonterra's bid were successful.

National Foods currently has a licensing agreement with Sodima to distribute the Yoplait brand in Australia.

Fonterra Cooperative Ltd. chief executive Andrew Ferrier said last week that if Fonterra ended up with 100 percent of National Foods it may establish a joint venture in Australia and New Zealand with Yoplait.

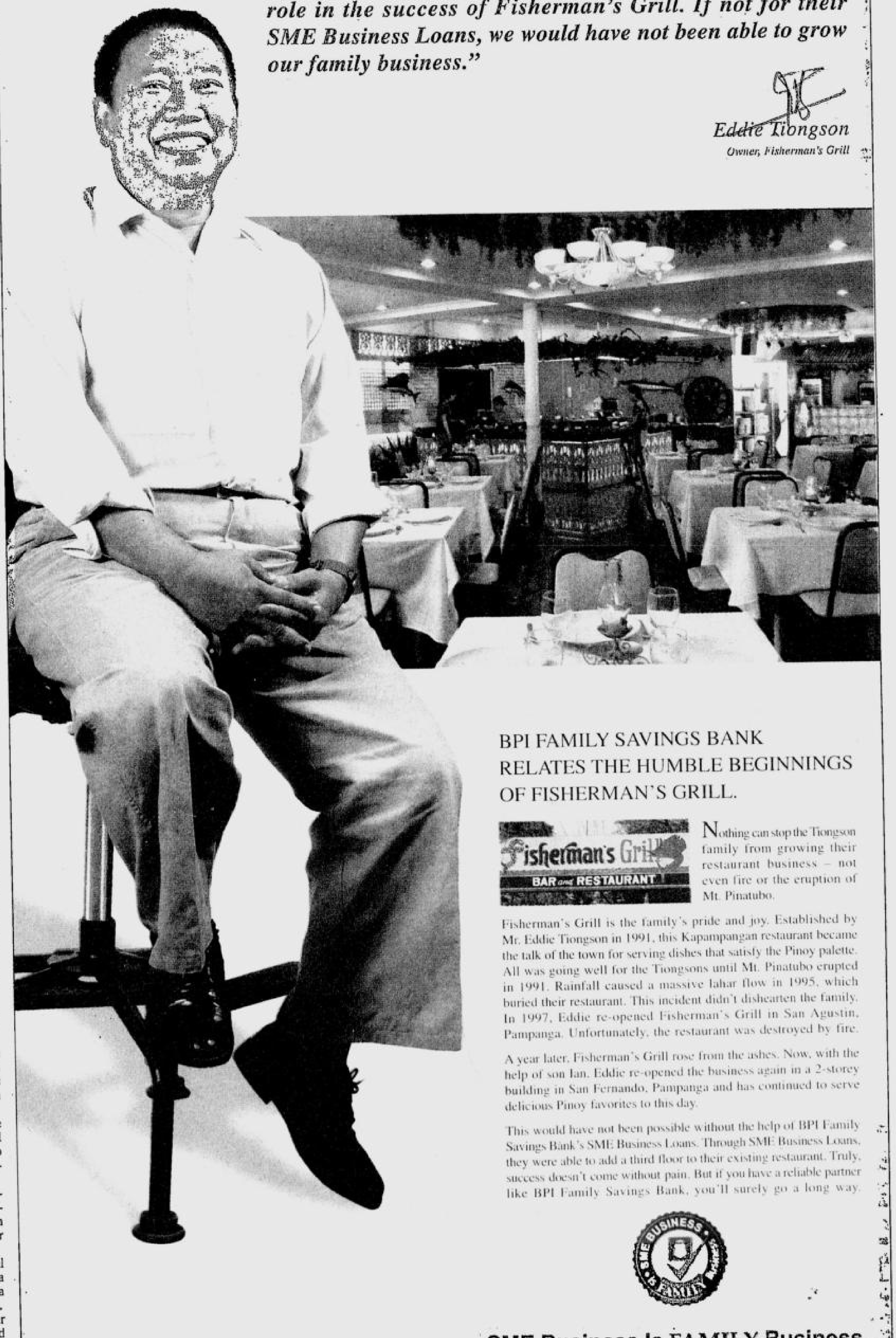
San Miguel said in its complaint to the takeovers panel that Yoplait and Sodima had become associates of Fonterra in relation to National Foods and should provide more details about the joint venture.

It also said any National Foods shareholders who had accepted the Fonterra offer without receiving the additional information should be given the right to withdraw their acceptances.

Applications to Australia's Takeovers Panel to require bidders or targets to release extra information or alter documentation are a common tactic in Australian takeover battles.

The takeovers panel said it would consider San Miguel's application but had not decided if it would conduct proceedings into the complaint.

San Miguel is expected to say by Thursday whether it will raise or extend its offer for National Foods, whose shares were flat at A$6.36 in afternoon trade in a wider market down 0.1 percent. *Reuters*



"BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK played an important role in the success of Fisherman's Grill. If not for their SME Business Loans, we would have not been able to grow our family business."

Eddie Tiongson
Owner, Fisherman's Grill

BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK RELATES THE HUMBLE BEGINNINGS OF FISHERMAN'S GRILL.

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A year later, Fisherman's Grill rose from the ashes. Now, with the help of son Ian, Eddie re-opened the business again in a 2-storey building in San Fernando, Pampanga and has continued to serve delicious Pinoy favorites to this day.

This would have not been possible without the help of BPI Family Savings Bank's SME Business Loans. Through SME Business Loans, they were able to add a third floor to their existing restaurant. Truly, success doesn't come without pain. But if you have a reliable partner like BPI Family Savings Bank, you'll surely go a long way.

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BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK

Donor community urges RP to fast-track reforms

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GLOBAL donor community has encouraged the Philippines to take advantage of the "narrowing" window of opportunity to fast-track reforms that would help reduce the budget deficit.

In a teleconference yesterday, World Bank country director Joachim Von Ambsberg said it was the right time to implement reforms due to robust domestic growth and the fresh mandate of the Arroyo administration.

"The economic opportunity created by the high growth of above 6 percent, and by a very favorable international environment, means that difficult reforms are more feasible now because they occur in the context of a growing economy and rising incomes, and are thus less painful than they would be under more adverse circumstances," Von Amsberg said in a media briefing after the conference.

He said, however, that the window of opportunity was closing rapidly as the world economy was showing signs of slowing down and interest rates were on the rise.

Von Ambsberg was in Davao for the two-day Philippine Development Forum, which was concluded yesterday. He co-chaired the forum with Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima.

The 26th meeting of the Philippine Consultative Group, renamed PDF, shifted its focus from a mere pledging session into a participatory forum that included representatives from local government units, legislative and judicial branches, civil society and the private sector.

The WB executive said the donors recognized recent actions taken by the government to solve its fiscal problem. These include critical power tariff adjustments, passage of "sin" taxes, revenue integrity programs and structural reforms in the energy sector.

"The participants emphasized that aggressive fiscal reforms were the critical prerequisite for growth, since the present level of public debt and debt service limits development spending and represent a key source of vulnerability," Von Amsberg said.

He said the participants considered as "essential" the passage of a "high-quality" value added tax (VAT) bill that would increase the rate and keep administration simple.

But he noted that there was a prevailing view that additional measures still needed to be put in place to reduce the deficit and fund the developmental priorities of the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan.

"Those efforts would include further tax measures, improvement in tax administration and possibly a fiscal responsibility act," Von Amsberg said.

During the meeting, Von Amsberg said a number of the official development assistance (ODA) partners indicated their willingness to go beyond current programs and consider "substantially" higher financial commitments "if and when the country establishes a track record of significant and sustained fiscal actions and fiscal improvements reflecting the government's intention to over-perform on its fiscal targets and front-load its fiscal reform efforts."

GMA 7 shelves IPO . . .

From page B1

are satisfactorily resolved."

"The network will try to work out a solution that will be in the best interest of the company," the company said in a statement.

Part of the listing plan is a secondary offering that would dilute the ownership of the major shareholders but would keep them in control.

The Jimenez family had been reportedly trying to sell its stake in GMA after the Gozons and the Duavits took over the operations and management of the network a couple of years ago.

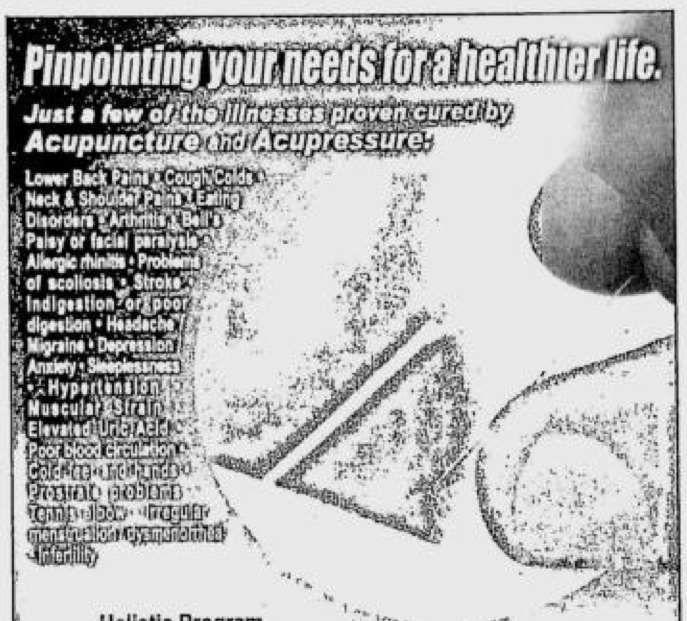
Last year, the Jimenez family was reported to be selling its stake to Manuel V. Pangilinan, chair of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

GMA's former president and chief executive officer Menardo Jimenez Sr. relinquished his post to his brother-in law Felipe Gozon following a botched deal with PLDT in 2001. Gozon's sister is married to Jimenez.

PLDT's bid to acquire a controlling stake in GMA failed to materialize due to pricing and valuation differences.

Pangilinan said in May last year that he was open to the possibility of acquiring Jimenez's 35-percent stake in GMA.

But the telecom executive has reportedly shifted his interest to either Channel 13 or Channel 9. Sources said Pangilinan might join forces with El Shaddai leader Mike Velarde to buy either of the two sequestered TV stations.



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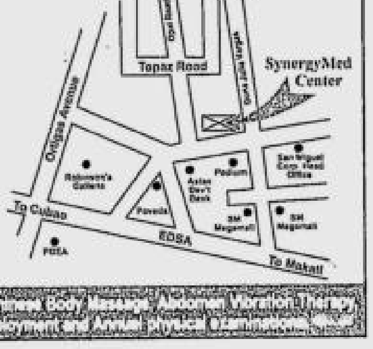

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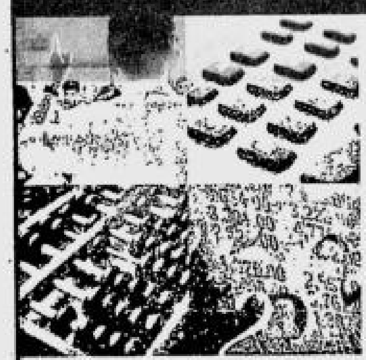

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Basic Entrepreneurial Finance: Establishing the Enterprise
April 25 - 28, 2005

Program Overview
For owners, entrepreneurs, managers, senior finance officers of small, medium enterprises (SMEs). This course aims to provide participants the basic tools for analyzing the enterprise's financial performance, managing enterprise funds and financial planning and budgeting.

Course Coverage: Learning the basic tools for:
Analyzing Enterprise Financial Performance
- Understanding and Constructing Financial Statements
- Financial Analysis
- Funds Flow Analysis

Managing Enterprise Funds
- Working Capital Management
- Financial Forecasting
- Estimating Financial Requirements

Managing Cost & Profit
- Cost-Volume Analysis
- Product Line Analysis
- Break-even Analysis

Financial Planning and Budgeting
- Master Budgeting
- Operating Budget

Advanced Entrepreneurial Finance: Growing the Enterprise
May 16 - 19, 2005

Program Overview
For owners, entrepreneurs, managers, senior finance officers of small, medium enterprises (SMEs). This course aims to enable participants to organize and align the finance functions and strategies towards greater growth and assured sustainability of the enterprise.

Course Coverage: Learning the intricacies and relationship of:
Financial and Business Direction
- Finance Functions
- Linking Policies and Strategies
- Assessing Financial Performance
- Pursuing Growth and Sustainability

Investment and Growth
- Translating Strategies to Investments
- Analyzing Investment Options
- Assessing Business Risk

Finance and Stability
- Matching Financing to Investments
- Structuring Capital Requirements
- Assessing Financial Risk

Control and Performance Steering
- Analyzing Information Needs
- Setting up Management Control System

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CAROLINA Bamboo Garden

Can bamboo save RP?

By Amadis Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

FEATURE

IN THE hills of Antipolo City overlooking Metro Manila, in Barangay San José near Prayer Mountain, lies the Carolina Bamboo Garden. As its name indicates, the farm propagates and promotes bamboo: a joy to behold; graceful, pliant and resilient like the Filipino people, with a smorgasbord of uses, business opportunities and, yes, with a potential even for improving the economy.

The garden is a project of the Majent Foundation Inc., headed by Carolina G. Jimenez.

Opportunities

"I want more people to go into bamboo," says Jimenez. "It grows on wet ground, has so many uses and doesn't need any maintenance. *At ang ganda ng* sound (And the sound is nice), like chimes."

She adds, "I have this waiting list (of buyers) but I don't want to go commercial yet. There's a lot of money in it. You can easily be a bamboo entrepreneur. There's a big demand for bamboo. My first buyer was from Davao."

Bamboo can be planted in your backyard.

Going into the business

First of all, Jimenez suggests, obtain a piece of land with water. Then buy seedlings, grow for four years at least, and create a nursery.

There are so many kinds of bamboo, like *bayog*, bolo, Buddha's Belly, hedge, *kawayan tinik*, oldham, variegated and yellow bamboo. And the uses are a-plenty: to address soil erosion, for processing into pulp and paper, furniture and construction, innovative sculptures like the works of artist Francisco M. Verano, ornaments, punting poles and scaffolding, utensils and handicrafts.

Add fishing rods, toys, walking sticks, ski poles, handles for umbrella and fans, park landscaping, hedges, structural material for buildings and fences, and to form lumber with or without lamination. And that's not a complete list. Think of the Las Piñas Bamboo Organ. The young shoots are edible, and turn yellow-pinkish after cooking.

Rave review

Convenor Odette Alcantara of Mother Earth Philippines gives bamboo a rave review: "The integrity and poetry of bamboo is awe-inspiring. It might as well be our portrait as a people. Where there are bamboo, especially along the river banks, the air is fresh. It can give you shelter, music (Pangkat Kawayan), dance (Tinikling and Singkil)... The farmer and his carabao take a quality rest under its shade."

She adds: "Bamboo is not only food for a thirsty soul, a hungry mind but for our undernourished bodies as well. Who says we are a poor country? Bamboo can save the country."

"THERE'S a lot of money in it (bamboo)."

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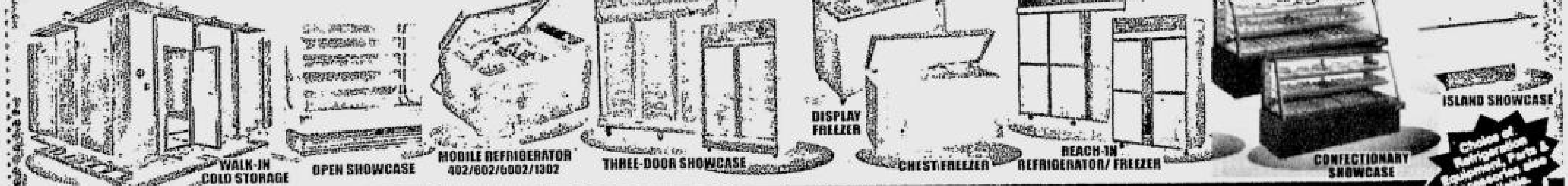

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Stocks end lower on profit-taking

From page B1

quidating some of their holdings to pay for subscriptions for the initial public offerings of Manila Water and SM Investments.

Losers outnumbered gainers 57 to 39, with 48 issues unchanged.

A leading loser was Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., which also led the market rise in recent days after posting a record P28-billion net profit in 2004, and projecting stronger earnings this year. PLDT lost 1.7 percent to close at P1,465. *AP*

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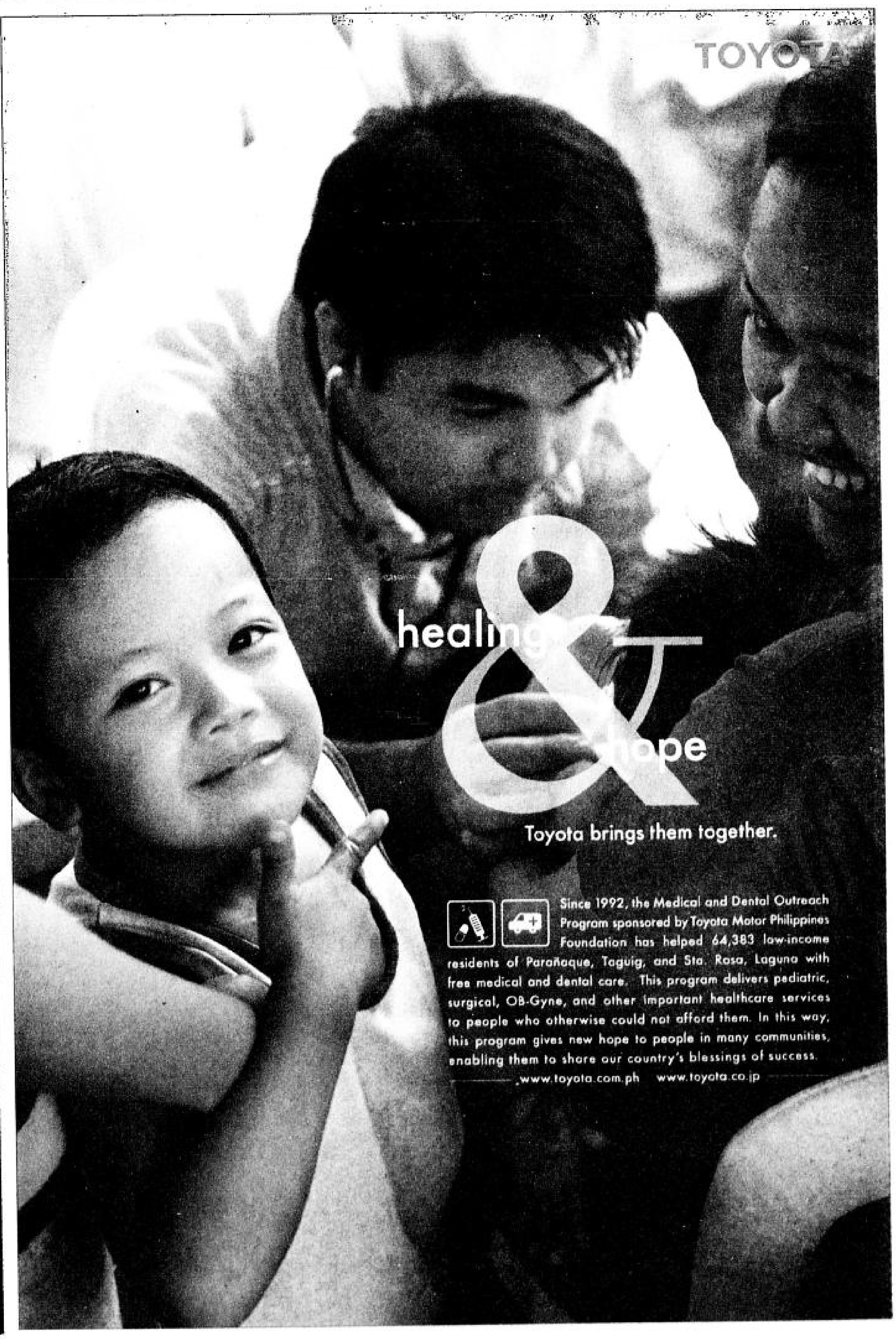

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Bank eyes ₱16B from rights offer

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE METROPOLITAN Bank and Trust Co., the country's biggest bank, yesterday said it could raise over P16 billion in gross proceeds from the offering of new shares to stockholders.

The bank also announced that the Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas had approved the stock rights offering.

The bank hopes to complete the rights offering within the second quarter.

In documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, the bank said it expected gross proceeds of at least P5.5 billion and as much as P16.5 billion from its stock rights offering.

Net proceeds were estimated to range between P5.4 billion and P16.33 billion after deducting the expenses estimated at one percent of the total proceeds.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura welcomed Metrobank's plan and said it augured well for the banking industry.

"This is a sign of confidence in the economy," Buenaventura said. "We look forward to more banks undertaking similar fund-raising activities to take advantage of the improving business climate."

The issuance was proposed in order to beef up Metrobank's capital base and strengthen its balance sheet.

The bank said the proceeds would be used to "optimize funding mix to enhance profitability, support anticipated loan growth, and increase provisioning levels."

Its board of directors had authorized the issuance of up to 350 million shares of the authorized but unissued capital stock of the bank.

In its letter to the BSP, Metrobank said its board had authorized its president, Antonio S. Abacan Jr., to determine the issue price. It will be based on a 0 to 10 percent discount to either the closing price on the trading day preceding the pricing date or the weighted average price of the shares in the last ten trading days preceding the pricing date.

Abacan was also authorized to fix the record date to determine the stockholders entitled to subscribe to the additional issues after the listing and other regulatory requirements were met.

Metrobank earlier reported a 20.2 percent increase in unaudited net income of P3.63 billion in 2004 over P3.02 billion a year ago.

The bank said the growth signaled "better prospects for the bank, given rising interest rates, its strong franchise in the upper and middle market, as well as its leadership position in the remittance business and trust accounts."

The bank's investment house subsidiary, First Metro Investment Corp., will underwrite the offering.

Metrobank has an authorized capital of 2.5 billion shares, of which 1.63 billion are issued and outstanding. With the additional issuance, the bank said the number of unissued shares would go down to 516.34 million.

Metrobank is controlled by taipan George Ty, who also has interests in real estate, car manufacturing and retailing, investment banking, power generation and insurance.

Tanduay to buy 6 liquor firms

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

LIQUOR firm Tanduay Holdings Inc. (Tanduay) of the Lucio Tan Group is setting aside P3 billion to buy six companies engaging in the distribution and manufacture of liquor and alcohol.

The acquisition are seen to enhance the value of the rhum distributor and make it more attractive to prospective investors, said sources close to the company.

According to the sources, once the acquisition pushes through in the second half of the year and the assets of its target companies are folded in, Tanduay's assets will expand to nearly P10 billion from the present P7.3 billion.

Tanduay is still studying its options in financing the planned acquisitions.

In a disclosure yesterday, Tanduay said its board approved the acquisition of the six firms.

Cecilia Pesayco, Tanduay corporate secretary, said management was directed to negotiate "for the best terms and conditions, including tax costs" in purchasing the following companies: Asian Alcohol Corp., Absolute Chemicals Inc., DyZum Distillery Inc., Cabuyao Packaging Corp., Flor de Caña Shipping Inc. and Negros General Services.

TANDUAY/B5

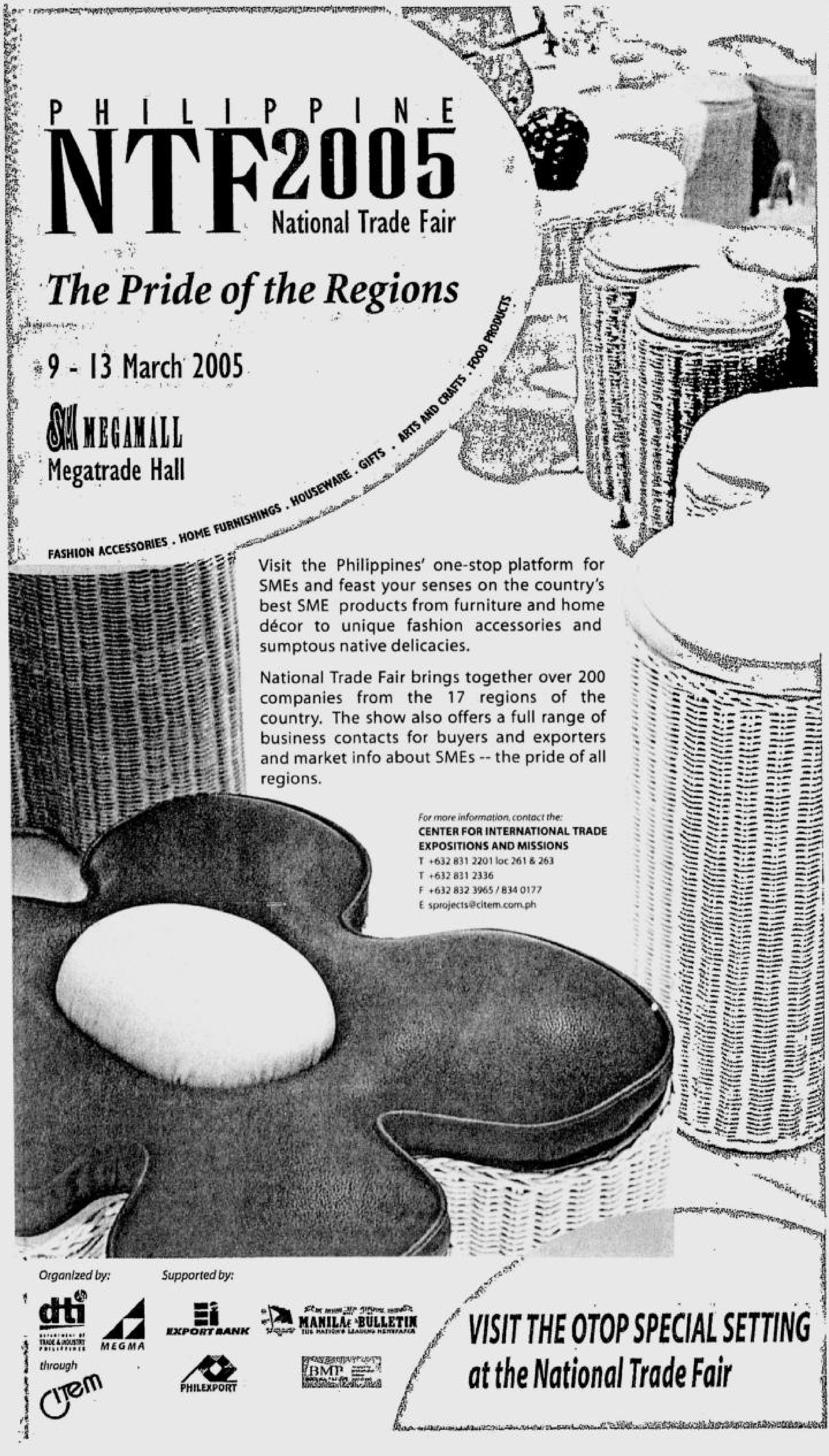
PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 8, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	68,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	30	30	30	30	530,300
Bank of the Phil. Islands	59	59.5	59	59.5	648,900
China Banking Corp.	675	685	675	685	17,290
Chinatrust Comm. Bank	18	18	18	18	500
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	52	52	51	51	125,400
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.96	0.97	0.87	0.92	24,720,000
International Exch. Bank	19	19	18.75	19	19,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	36	36	35.5	36	732,700
Philippine National Bank	32	32	31.5	31.5	108,500
Phil. Savings Bank	30.5	33	30.5	33	8,600
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	1,500
Security Bank Corp.	31	31	31	31	16,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	82,400
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2500	2520	2500	2520	880
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2.08	2.16	2.08	2.14	923,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	142	145	142	145	3,960
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1745	1760	1745	1755	1,570
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	18	18	17.75	17.75	233,700
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.58	1.58	1.5	1.54	4,687,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	955	955	940	940	7,940
Ipeople Inc.	4.7	4.75	4.7	4.75	124,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	200,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.065	0.0625	0.065	15,200,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	140,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.08	2.08	2.08	2.08	20,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.85	3.85	3.75	3.85	4,771,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	25,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1485	1485	1450	1465	121,480
Ivantage Corp.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	230,000
Philweb Corp.	0.021	0.022	0.021	0.022	111,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	21.5	21.5	21	21.25	340,900
Manila Electric Co. B	31.5	31.5	30.5	31	494,600
Petron Corp.	4.3	4.35	4.25	4.3	4,743,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.5	1.5	1.46	1.46	418,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.96	1.96	1.96	1.96	100,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.76	1,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	8.5	8.5	8.3	8.4	299,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.64	0.65	0.64	0.64	330,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.67	0.7	2,300,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.5	4.65	4.45	4.45	4,726,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	18,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	10,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	26,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	2,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	30	30	29.5	29.5	419,500
RFM Corp.	1.04	1.04	0.98	1.02	1,360,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.39	0.39	40,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	57	56.5	57	247,400
San Miguel Corp. B	82	84	82	84	286,200
Universal Robina Corp.	10.5	11	10.5	11	185,800
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.3	1,050,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	95,800,000
Ayala Corp.	8.4	8.4	8.3	8.3	4,753,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.69	0.7	0.66	0.7	1,110,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.95	5	4.85	5	2,560,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11	11	10.75	10.75	7,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.0675	0.07	0.06	0.06	26,600,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.48	2.48	2.36	2.38	4,022,000
APC Group Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	2,060,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	10,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	14,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	15,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	28.5	28.5	26.5	27	160,300
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.205	0.21	0.2	0.21	5,420,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.38	1.42	1.36	1.4	25,678,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1	1	1	1	410,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	1,850,000
Cadp Group Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	50,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	350,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.58	0.6	0.55	0.58	3,510,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.45	4.65	4.4	4.4	8,589,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	400,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.58	1.64	1.52	1.6	491,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	11	11.25	10.75	10.75	1,792,600
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	61	63.5	61	61.5	1,563,400
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.26	0.26	840,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.125	0.135	0.125	0.13	63,920,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.76	1.78	1,003,000
Ionics Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	30,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.55	3.75	3.55	3.75	912,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.02	2.02	2	2.02	237,000
Medco Holdings	0.47	0.48	0.47	0.47	4,390,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.76	1.8	1.74	1.76	4,771,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.52	0.53	0.45	0.52	380,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.62	0.62	0.6	0.61	25,300,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	1,590,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	290,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1	1.04	1	1.04	199,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.66	0.66	2,290,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.205	0.21	0.19	0.2	10,050,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.2	0.21	1,630,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	550,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	50,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	150,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.17	0.19	0.155	0.155	21,630,000
Pryce Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	23,540,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.22	0.26	0.22	0.26	300,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.64	1.68	1.6	1.6	8,415,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.18	1.2	727,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.52	1.56	1.5	1.56	7,646,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	10,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	17.75	17.75	17.25	17.5	980,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series O	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.6	9.6	9.5	9.6	2,383,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	430,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.04	2,360,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	3,830,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.34	0.34	11,740,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	400,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.6	0.61	0.58	0.58	24,290,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2	2	1.94	1.94	4,175,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	600,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	10,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.27	2,040,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	4,700,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.22	0.27	0.22	0.27	9,020,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	10,000
Primex Corp.	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	80,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	3.25	3.75	3.25	3.75	457,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	170,000
SM Development Corp.	1.88	1.88	1.88	1.88	408,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	9.4	9.4	8.9	8.9	7,337,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	168,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	193,100,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.1	6.1	5.9	6	1,300,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.4	0.4	0.39	0.4	13,830,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.44	0.44	0.43	0.43	8,870,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.019	15,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	22,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.01	0.011	0.0095	0.01	928,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.14	1.16	1.14	1.14	225,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.42	1.44	1.4	1.4	2,691,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	43.5	44	43	43.5	1,984,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	360,000
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	11,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	9,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.008	0.008	0.0075	0.0075	66,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	80,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.245	0.245	0.23	0.23	9,620,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.4	0.42	0.4	0.42	2,170,000

CURRENCIES

March 8, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.756830	1.000000	54.7790
Japan	Yen	0.007196	0.009508	0.5208
United Kingdom	Pound	1.448649	1.914100	104.8525
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.097035	0.128212	7.0233
Switzerland	Franc	0.643892	0.850774	46.6045
Canada	Dollar	0.615459	0.813206	44.5466
Singapore	Dollar	0.465570	0.615157	33.6977
Australia	Dollar	0.599279	0.791828	43.3755
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.007561	2.652590	145.3062
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.201810	0.266652	14.6069
Brunei	Dollar	0.464142	0.613271	33.5944
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000081	0.000107	0.0059
Thailand	Baht	0.019725	0.026063	1.4277
UAE	Dirham	0.206064	0.272272	14.9148
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.321300	72.3795
Argentina	Peso	0.258745	0.341880	18.7278
Brazil	Real	0.285112	0.376719	20.6363
Denmark	Kroner	0.134347	0.177513	9.7240
India	Rupee	0.017359	0.022936	1.2564
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.199192	0.263193	14.4174
Mexico	New Peso	0.068669	0.090732	4.9702
New Zealand	Dollar	0.556084	0.734754	40.2491
Norway	Kroner	0.121977	0.161168	8.8286
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012755	0.016853	0.9232
South Africa	Rand	0.129373	0.170940	9.3639
Korea	Won	0.000753	0.000995	0.0545
Sweden	Kroner	0.110725	0.146301	8.0142
Syria	Pound	0.014580	0.019264	1.0553
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024620	0.032531	1.7820
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000353	0.000466	0.0255



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Now showing: Family feud on GMA 7

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

UNRESOLVED boardroom issues between the related Gozon and Jimenez families, which could lead to another management shakeup, has prompted GMA 7 to indefinitely postpone the network's already delayed initial public offering.

"The majority owners of the network wanted to give the public the chance to become shareholders of a company which engages in public service, through the IPO, without losing management control of the company," GMA 7 said in a statement.

The putative P9-billion IPO offering would be on hold "until certain issues between the majority and minority shareholders are satisfactorily resolved."

Despite the corporate tone of the statement, only three individuals actually control the country's leading television network—chairman/president/CEO Felipe Gozon with his 30 percent, his brother-in-law Menardo Jimenez whom he ousted in December 2000 with another 30 percent, and former Rep. Gilberto Duavit, controlling the swing 35 percent block.

As late as September 2004, when GMA 7 was on a pre-IPO publicity blitz, Gozon sounded confident that he would retain control of the network despite a plan for each bloc to divest proportionately; after all, it was under Gozon's watch that GMA 7 fortunes rose to overtake the erstwhile No. 1 moneymaker, ABS-CBN.

GMA 7, Gozon said at that time, was planning to offer about 20 to 30 percent of its shares, both locally and through American depository receipts.

"We will have at least 50+1 percent stake (post-IPO)," Gozon was quoted as saying. "I will not lose control of the company."

"If I were Nards Jimenez, I'd be very happy and ecstatic, because the market value of the whole company and his stocks have now doubled under my administration," he added.

Though he has kept himself inaccessible to the media, Jimenez has been heard complaining to his close friends about his sudden fall from grace.

To keep himself from moping after his ouster, Jimenez joined Channel 5 owner Antonio Cojuangco Jr. and former BIR Commissioner Dakila Fonacier to establish a network of theater-anchored strip malls in select areas nationwide. That venture has yet to meet shareholder expectations.

Despite having resigned from the GMA 7 board, Jimenez, who is married to a sister of Gozon, still wants to push through with the IPO, but apparently under certain conditions.

According to the grapevine, the two Jimenez children in the board, Laura Jimenez-Westfall and Joel Marcelo Jimenez, submitted a list of shareholder demands in the last board meeting, prompting their chairman-uncle, who was said to have been surprised by the last-minute change of mind, to indefinitely suspend the listing.

Money-go-round

- MANUEL V. Pangilinan acquired another 1,000 shares of PLDT, boosting his total investment in the company he chairs to 90,874 shares. At yesterday's close of P1,465 a share, that bloc was worth over P133 million.
- BROADCAST magnate Jose Luis "Bobet" Vera has just been named Pag-IBIG Fund board member by Vice President Noli de Castro.
- PROPERTY developer DMCI Holdings vice chair Isidro Consunji yesterday left for London and Milan to establish sales offices in these cities, which have many Filipino overseas workers.

Heard through the grapevine

IN ADDITION to another condominium, Rockwell later this year plans to start construction of a cluster of villas and a resort club, this time in the tourist hotspot of Boracay.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Tanduay . . .

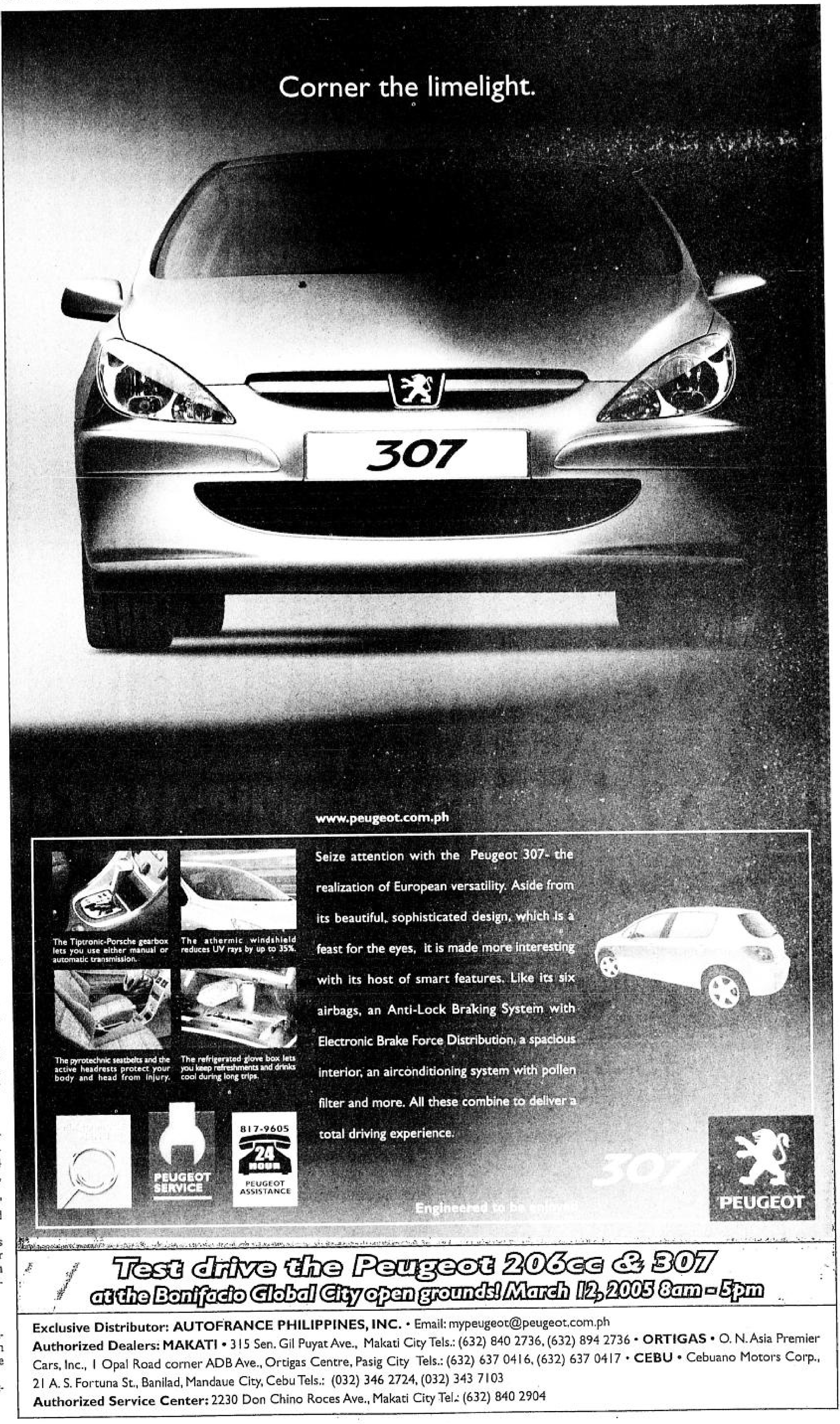
From page B4

According to sources, most of the firms are owned partly by companies linked to the Lucio Tan Group.

At present Tanduay has no distillery. It buys alcohol from some of these firms through its 100-percent subsidiary, Tanduay Distillers Inc.

Asian Alcohol, based in Negros Occidental, is the country's second largest distillery. It has an authorized capital of P50 million. Absolute Chemicals Inc., based in Lian, Batangas, has an authorized capital of P60 million. It manufactures, imports, exports, buys and sells chemicals.

Dyzum Distillery presently has no operations and is based also in Lian Batangas.



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Korean group eyes PNOC-EC's Malampaya stake

A CONSORTIUM OF major South Korean players in global and regional energy industry is interested in acquiring 49 percent of the 10-percent stake in Malampaya gas field of PNOC-Exploration Corp., a subsidiary of Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC).

PNOC-EC president and chief executive officer Eduardo Mañalac said he believed that the South Korean group, led by LG International, "is determined to pursue its acquisition of the PNOC-EC interest."

He said that if the deal pushed through, it would be a welcome development.

Mañalac earlier said PNOC-EC was close to completing its partial divestment in the Malampaya project, noting that "only a few steps remain in the now two-year-old privatization process."

The consortium, with a combined capitalization of close to $3.2 billion, is composed of LG International, the Korea Gas Corp. (Kogas), Seoul City Gas Corp., and the Daesung Group.

LG has major interests in several large-scale energy development projects in Oman, Qatar, Vietnam, Irkutsk and East Siberia. With a market capitalization of $567 million, it reported sales of close to $5 billion and net profits of $94 million in 2003.

Kogas is reportedly the biggest importer of liquefied petroleum gas in the world today. With a market capitalization of $2.4 billion, it is the South Korean government's monopoly producer and supplier of natural gas in that country. It reported sales of $7 billion and net profit of $250 million in 2003. It also has investments in Qatar's RasGas and in the LNG business in Oman.

Seoul City Gas Corp. has capital of $109 million and owns some 2,800 kilometers of distribution pipeline network that serves 5 million people in Seoul's western area and three other cities. Daesung, capitalized at $100 million, has investments in petroleum gas projects, power plants, industrial gas construction, electronics and leisure.

An LG group official earlier said the possible acquisition by the group of a portion of PNOC-EC's Malampaya interest "will open the door for the expanded cooperation between the Philippines and South Korea in the field of power and energy."

He said the group also lauded "the transparency of the process involved in the privatization" of PNOC-EC's stake." Even if the rules and procedures were oftentimes seen as too stringent, this sends strong positive signals to international investors like us that the Philippines wants this deal done with credibility."

The long process sometimes challenged our patience but we understood clearly why the Philippine government had to exercise extra caution and prudence, he added.

The Malampaya oil and natural gas exploration and development project is the largest infrastructure project in the country. Some $2 billion have reportedly been invested in the upstream side of the project, and another $2.5 billion in power generation facilities that utilize the natural gas generated by the project.

Malampaya currently supplies some 30 percent of the overall power requirement of the Luzon grid.

PGMA VISITS EPLDT VENTUS IN ILOILO
President Macapagal-Arroyo recently toured the facilities of ePLDT Ventus Inc. in Iloilo, the first ePLDT call center outside Metro Manila with an initial 300-seat capacity. She is shown here applauding the presentation of PLDT senior vice president for call center business Rosalie Montenegro (center) who briefed the President on how the PLDT Group plans to make Iloilo one of the country's call center hubs. Looking on is ePLDT Ventus Business Development director Ken Brian P. Lamzon.

US fund buys PLDT shares

By Clarissa S. Batino

FIDELITY Investments, the world's largest mutual fund, recently acquired 5.13 percent of the outstanding stocks of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. for $64 million.

The acquisition was made through Fidelity Investments' wholly owned units FMR Corp. and Fidelity International Ltd.

The two fund management units informed the stock exchange that they were open to the possibility of making additional investments in PLDT in the future.

FMR and Fidelity clarified that the acquisition was not intended to take over controlling interest in the company.

PLDT president Napoleon Nazareno welcomed this development saying," this is good for the company because Fidelity is one of the largest funds in world. The increase in their investments in PLDT affirms their positive outlook on the company."

FMR Corp. and Fidelity hold a total of 8.73 million shares or 5.13 percent of the 170.24 million issued stocks of PLDT. FMR Corp., a financial services conglomerate, owns 6.19 million shares or 3.64 percent while Fidelity International accounts for 2.54 million shares or 1.49 percent.

Shares acquired were in the form of common shares and American Depository Receipts or ADRs.

"FMR Corp. and Fidelity may, subject to market conditions, make additional investments in or dispositions of securities of PLDT in the future, including additional purchases of ordinary shares," Fidelity told the stock exchange in a letter dated March 3.

Nazareno said big fund managers like Fidelity were known to be long-term investors.

On March 4, PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan bought another 1,000 shares of the telecom giant at P1,465 each. He now has 90,874 shares.

Pangilinan said PLDT's share price could still go up given that that its price earning ratio of about 10 times its 2004 performance was still lower compared with those of other companies in the region.

"PLDT's PE ratio is quite low compared with its regional peers' of about 14 times. There is still room for growth in terms of share price," the PLDT chair said during last week's briefing on the company's 2004 performance.

PLDT shares closed lower at P1,465 yesterday against P1,490 last Monday.

Pangilinan said next year's dividends may double to 20 percent of this year's net profit. He said the group's net income should hit P27 billion this year.

PLDT's net profit in 2004 of P25.17 billion surpassed its twice-upgraded profit target of P24 billion and was 237 percent higher than an adjusted 2003 income of P7.5 billion.

"I would like to think that we will achieve something like P27 billion for 2005," said the PLDT chair.

Last year's relatively smooth peso-dollar rate reduced the group's foreign exchange losses to P2.7 billion against P9 billion in losses in 2003.

SPI acquires India-Based medical transcription firm

SPI Technologies Inc., a company founded in the Philippines and is now one of the world's leading content outsourcing services providers, announced the signing of an agreement to acquire India-based KG Information Services and Technologies Private Limited's medical transcription business (KGMT).

The acquisition KGMT will enable SPI to quickly expand its delivery capacity to meet accelerating demand for medical transcription services by US healthcare providers. The terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

"Providing medical transcription and other healthcare information management services is one of SPI's fastest growing lines of business," said Ernest Cu, president and CEO of SPI Technologies.

"The KGMT acquisition gives us state-of-the art facilities in India with a capacity of more than 800 employees to complement our medical transcription operations in the US and the Philippines."

KGMT is located in Coimbatore, the second largest city in Southern India after Chennai and considered the education center of the region.

"The acquisition of KGMT broadens our presence in the country, adding to our current staff count of nearly 1,000 across the cities of Chennai, Pondicherry, Kolkata and New Delhi. SPI Technologies is committed to building a greater presence in India and maintaining our leadership role in global business process outsourcing," said Cu.

Robert Cabato, resident and CEO of SPI Healthcare Documentation, the healthcare division of SPI Technologies, said "KGMT is an excellent fit for SPI,

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Germans set up P803-M fund for SME development

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—A German financial institution has set up a development fund worth 11 million euros or about P803 million, which will be used to finance micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in Negros Occidental, Cebu and Leyte.

This was disclosed Monday by Harald Neimeier, senior adviser for financial services of the Small and Medium Enterprise Development for Sustainable Employment Program (SMEDSEP), a Philippine-German development cooperation project.

He said in an interview that the loans would be coursed through rural banks in the pilot areas.

SMEDSEP loans would be available in Negros Occidental starting June, through active member-banks of the Negros Occidental Federation of Rural Bankers.

"Applications for loans, which could go as high as P2 million can be made now," Neimeier said.

He said SMEDSEP was yet to determine the interest rate on the loan, but assured the public that it would be lower than that of commercial banks.

The German institution focused on SME development as these institutions form the backbone of the local economy, thus, must get easier access to loans to grow their business.

"The MSMEs are struggling with a multitude of economic-policy, legal and bureaucratic obstacles," he said.

He said these include insufficient access to markets, promotional measures, business services, training programs as well as financial and credit services.

"This prevented businesses from using their entrepreneurial capacities to the full," he said.

Neimier said the SMEDSEP's goal was to create favorable business conditions in the Visayas for MSMEs with growth potential.

Funding for the loans will come from the German development bank—Kredit Fur Wederaufbau (Credit for Reconstruction and Development)—to be channeled though the SMEDSEP.

The SMEDSEP is implementing the program with the help of the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, Department of Trade and Industry and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

15 used cars seized in Subic

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Fifteen imported used vehicles from Japan worth P384 million were seized here recently in the latest anti-smuggling operation of the Task Force Subic and Bureau of Customs officials.

Seized due to insufficient importation documents were 14 used utility vehicles and an F3 racing car loaded in five container vans, which were abandoned at the former Naval Station Depot (NSD) here.

Jose Calimlim, task force chief, said two container vans, each of which was declared to contain just two cars, instead had four cars each.

He said two other container vans declared to contain a utility van were loaded with three cars each.

Another container van declared to contain only used automotive parts worth $2,000 (P109,340) was discovered to be loaded with a Japanese racing car valued at $7 million (P382.7 million).

The 14 used utility vehicles were estimated to cost about P1.5 million.

The racing car, which was consigned to Miguel Ramirez, registered owner of Sports Values Inc., a locator here, was the biggest haul so far since the task force was formed late last year.

The racing car was shipped from Gotemba City in Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan, and arrived here on Feb. 23.

Calimlim said the two container vans containing six of the seized utility vans from Japan were consigned to Global International (Subic) Philippines Inc.

The eight other seized vehicles were Hyundai sedans from South Korea.

Customs Deputy Commissioner Celso Templo, who joined the task force in opening the vans, said their move was "a signal to people who are involved in smuggling activities."

"We are going after those people who are committing all forms of smuggling," he said.

Calimlim said six cases against 15 people, mostly Subic locators, were already filed in court, while five others are under investigation. *Ansbert Joaquin and Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Milkfish processing plant opens

By Felipe V. Celino
PDI Visayas Bureau

ROXAS CITY—A pioneering bangus (milkfish) deboning and seafood processing plant recently started operations here.

The plant inaugurated by President Macapagal-Arroyo is the first of its kind in the country, and was funded by a P14.7-million loan from the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund.

ACEF is a special purpose fund to help the agricultural sector become globally competitive.

The plant owned by JC King Enterprises plans to produce 15 tons of boneless milkfish a month to meet the growing demand for processed value-added seafood products here and abroad.

Gov. Vicente Bemejo said the seafood plant would create jobs, push the local economy toward progress, and improve the lives of Capiceños.

Bermejo said Capiz, a major producer of milkfish, could produce over 23,000 metric tons a year.

Capiz boasts of having the biggest areas of developed swampy mangroves and brackish water areas most suitable for milkfish culture.

The President, together with Sen. Mar Roxas and some of her Cabinet secretaries, were recently in Capiz, the "Seafood Capital of the Philippine," to also launch the Consumer Welfare Desk, Price Watch Board and "Kilohan ng Bayan" as well as to monitor the prices of basic commodities at the province's premier market, the Teodoro Arcenas Trade Center (TATC).

Chikka offers new services

CHIKKA Asia, provider of enhanced mobile messaging services, has expanded its suite of products to include voice content.

Under its Audio Content Delivery Platform, Chikka will provide services such as actual celebrity voice calls to fans, and inspirational words set to background music.

"Once again, Chikka sets the trend in mobile information and entertainment," said Mikey Garrovillo, director for product development for Chikka Asia.

Chikka pioneered a subscription-based celebrity texting service in 2003 that became one of the country's biggest mobile VAS services.

Launched by Smart Communications as "Startxt," the service has since been made available to subscribers in Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong through international carriers. MMS and picture messaging services have also since been added to the bigger "StarPortal."

The new voice-based service will be branded by Smart Communications as "StarCaller."

"After only one month, StarCaller has met a very encouraging response from mobile users who are choosing to get real celebrity voice calls, on a subscription basis," Garrovillo said.

As to the actual platform, Francis Trinidad, Chikka co-director for product development said: "The innovation lay in creating synergies between existing technologies. It's all about maximizing what is already there."

The "StarCaller" platform delivers audio-based content including voice recordings, tones, and music via standard voice channels integrated with SMS-based commands.

"We are not certain that the StarCaller platform is a world-first. What we are sure of is that it is the first time voice-based VAS is proving itself as a serious mobile VAS revenue source in a land where text messaging still rules," added Trinidad.

Chikka Asia is a pioneer in wireless applications services development, having created the world's first mobile instant messaging in 2001.

The company has since developed other integrated applications including mobile-interactive TV, SMS-enabled auction sites, mobile matchmaking, and mobile versions of Internet Relay Chat.

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Global growth still on course, central bankers say

BASEL, Switzerland—Top central bankers said on Monday their forecast for growth in the world economy was unchanged, but urged greater transparency from oil markets despite expectations of a fall in prices.

Jean-Claude Trichet, who chairs the G10 group of central bankers, said after they met in the Swiss city of Basel that there was a "broadly unchanged sentiment that we have robust growth this year."

Trichet added that "I do not exclude that the price of oil could diminish," but reiterated a call for continued vigilance.

"We would certainly call for an improvement in transparency," the European Central Bank chief told journalists, adding that the statement directed towards oil markets was "the main message" of the meeting with his counterparts.

At their last meeting in January, the G10 central bankers had predicted "substantial" economic growth of about four percent as the growth in oil prices subsided.

Trichet emphasized on Monday that the bankers' outlook was unchanged without citing a specific growth figure.

The G10's prediction was largely based on expectations of decline in oil prices following record highs reached in recent months.

Trichet indicated that the end of the harsher than expected winter in the northern hemisphere should calm oil markets.

Oil prices eased Monday following comments Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, expressing concern about the most recent rise caused by speculative buying, and committing Opec to maintaining stability and adequate supplies.

The G10 groups 11 central banks from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United States, as well as Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland.

Central bankers also examined low inflationary expectations or pressure on the world economy, concluding that it was partly down to greater credibility of central banks—including in the euro zone.

"We had the feeling that the credibility of central banks in delivering price stability over time had augmented," Trichet said.

"It is true in the euro area that we are impressed that the anchoring of inflationary expectations are quite good," he added.

The former French central bank chief also highlighted some concern about an overall current account deficit in the world, which was only tempered by high savings levels in Asia.

"In some parts of the world you have certain lack of savings, I'm thinking of the industrialized countries," Trichet said.

"Some other countries have a very big amount of savings, in particular some economies of Asia have an extraordinarily high amount of savings," he added.

Bankers were puzzled by the current behavior of the international financial system, citing the combination of low levels of real interest rates on a global basis, low volatility on financial markets and low yields.

"The real interest rates that are quite low are quite a puzzle," Trichet remarked.

The G10 came up with no firm answers on those issues but cited three factors which appeared to come into play, including the greater capacity of domestic economies to weather foreign exchange fluctuations.

"We have the feeling that the recent valuation up or down of various exchange rates had a very meagre influence on prices," Trichet said.

Greater central bank credibility also helped temper a deterioration in the fiscal position of national economies over time, while investors appeared to be attracted more by longer term investments following the turbulence of financial markets in recent years, he added.

Central bankers also noted that corporate restructuring may also have led to less need for borrowing, encouraging the lower level of spreads.

Trichet made no comments on the US economy. *AFP*

IMF, Argentina agree to more debt talks

WASHINGTON—The International Monetary Fund and Argentine economy officials agreed on Monday to hold talks in the coming weeks, following initial meetings in Washington on the country's debt swap and future of its suspended IMF loan program.

Argentina offered about $41 billion in new debt in exchange for over $102 billion in defaulted bonds and past due interest, amounting to about 30 cents on the dollar for investors.

Without commenting on the debt swap, the IMF said discussions with Argentine Economy Minister Roberto Lavagna and other senior officials were "fruitful and cordial."

"It was agreed that the next stage in the dialogue will be to hold technical-level meetings in Washington in the coming weeks," the IMF said in a brief statement.

A few blocks from the IMF headquarters, Lavagna later met US Treasury Secretary John Snow, Under Secretary for International Affairs, John Taylor, and his deputy Randall Quarles.

"Secretary Snow received an update from Minister Lavagna on the recently concluded debt exchange," Treasury spokesperson Tony Fratto said later in a statement.

He said the sides also discussed the state of the Argentine economy, including prospects for economic growth and inflation expectations, and plans for economic reforms.

The Argentine government said last week creditors agreed to swap 76 percent of defaulted bonds for new ones, a result IMF insiders said "may be acceptable for the IMF to consider a new program for Argentina."

But the IMF insiders, who agreed to speak on condition of anonymity, said mainly European shareholders in the IMF had raised concerns about the outstanding 24 percent of creditors who did not sign on to the offer, which closed on Feb. 25.

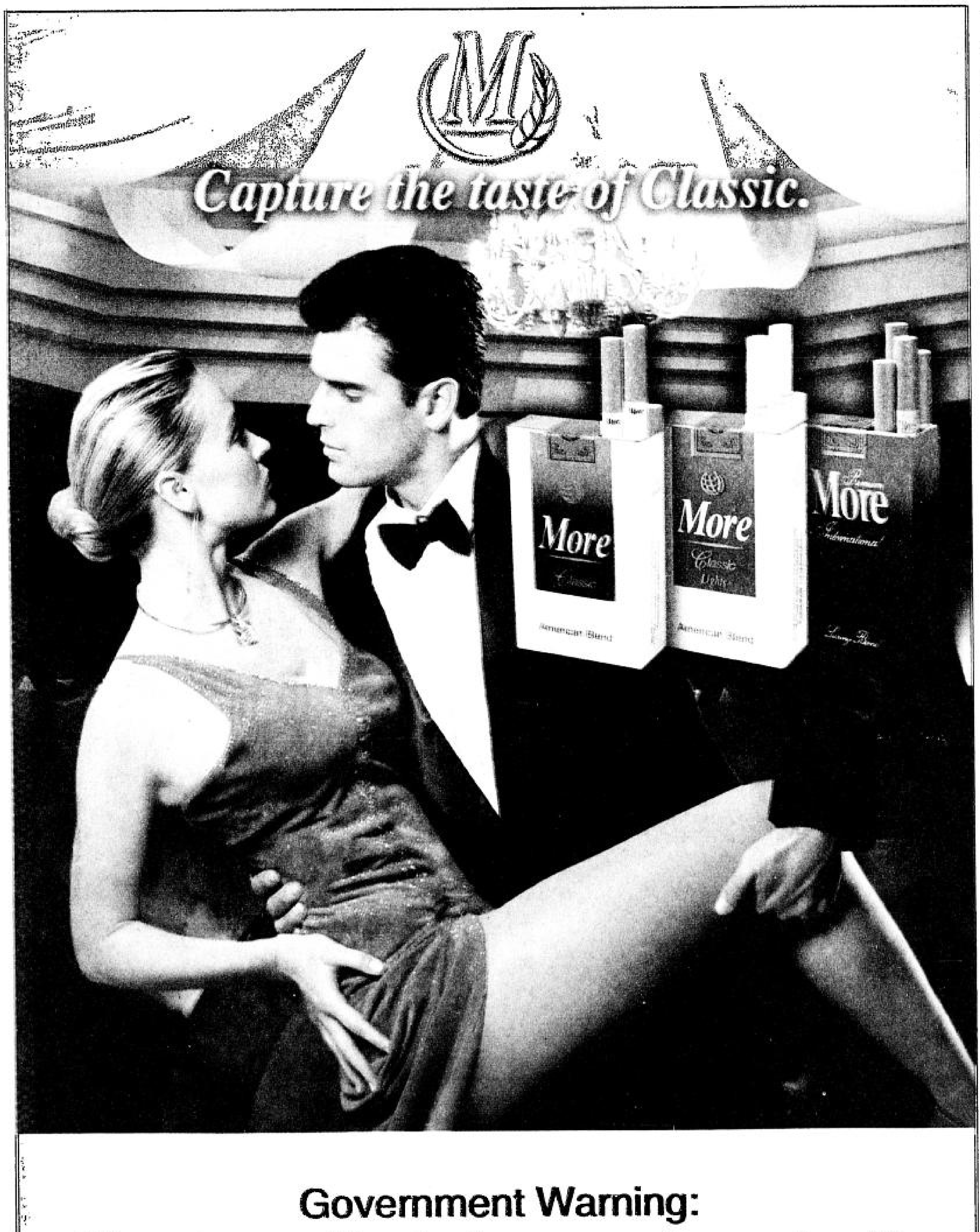
Argentina has said there will be no further offers.

Fernando Losada, a senior emerging market economist at New York-based ABN Amro, said he expected the IMF to urge Argentina to reach an agreement with the remaining group of creditors.

Still, the IMF has refused to officially comment on the debt swap, including what it sees as an appropriate acceptance level that would enable Argentina to move on three years after its unprecedented debt default. *Reuters*

EMPLOYEES sit at desks while visiting officials and dignitaries tour the Hanoi Stock Market during its official opening in Hanoi, Vietnam on March 8. Vietnam opened its second stock market Tuesday, this time in the capital of Hanoi, five years after the debut of its first bourse in Ho Chi Minh City.

AP



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Japan services sector picks up

TOKYO—Sentiment among Japan's service sector workers improved for a second straight month in February while households spent slightly more in January, a sign that personal consumption is picking up after months of stagnation.

Data on Tuesday also showed wages rising in January, underlining improving conditions for households long subdued by cuts in jobs and incomes.

The Cabinet Office survey of service sector workers, called "economy watchers" for their proximity to both consumer and retail trends, produced a diffusion index (DI) of 45.6 in February, up from 45.0 in January.

Though the index rose for a second month it was below 50 for the sixth straight month. A reading below 50 suggests more workers are pessimistic about conditions than are confident.

"We are seeing more customers coming in groups and with their families," said one restaurant worker. "They are ordering more and choosing more expensive dishes," the worker said.

The results, along with household spending data for January, encouraged views that personal spending is picking up after being hit by factors such as typhoons, earthquakes and mild winter weather.

Overall household spending in January rose 0.5 percent from a year earlier in price-adjusted real terms, up for the first time in five months.

From December, spending was up 4.3 percent on a seasonally adjusted basis.

"The figures are not that strong, and we may see a decline again in February due to seasonal factors, but overall the figures for now are putting less downward pressure on personal consumption," said Osamu Tanaka, an economist at Morgan Stanley.

An improvement in consumption, which accounts for more than half the economy, is seen as key for Japan, which was in a mild recession in the last nine months of 2004 as exports slowed. *Reuters*

Tourism growth seen slowing

LISBON—World travel and tourism is expected to grow 5.1 percent this year, slowing from a rebound of 6.8 percent the year before, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) said on Monday.

The world travel and tourism economy is forecast to expand to $7.8 trillion in 2005 as it returns to more normal growth rates, the London-based trade association said.

Asia represented one of the greatest world growth markets, especially because of the rapidly growing numbers of Chinese and Indian tourists, said WTTC President Jean-Claude Baumgarten.

"The pendulum is definitely swinging to Asia," he told a news conference on Portugal's travel and tourism.

The travel and tourism economy, which comprises direct and indirect revenues from the sector, declined 2.7 percent in 2002 because of the September 2001 attacks on the United States, according to Rick Miller, the WTTC's executive vice president.

It expanded 3.4 percent in 2003, with the SARS epidemic hampering growth, he said.

The major growth markets forecast for 2004 include China, the United States, France, Germany and Spain, Miller said. *AP*

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Oil prices near $54; Opec sees adequate supply

NEW YORK—Oil prices rebounded in late trade on Monday to remain near record highs as Opec members said there was no need to raise output to cool the market at next week's meeting.

After slipping earlier Monday on profit-taking, US light crude ended up 11 cents at $53.89 a barrel, retaining last week's gain of more than $2. Prices are within reach of the record $55.67 hit in late October. London Brent crude rose 15 cents to $51.95.

Oil prices have spiked about 19 percent in the past month, supported by a cold snap in the United States and Europe and lingering worries over rapid global demand growth.

Adding to market strength Monday, Opec members Algeria, Iran and Qatar lined up with Venezuela against boosting the cartel's production.

The group's president on Sunday expressed concern over high oil prices but said the market was well supplied.

"Opec is concerned about this price development despite the fact that the market is well-supplied and global crude oil stocks have continued to build," Opec president and Kuwaiti Oil Minister Sheikh Ahmad al-Fahd al-Sabah said in a statement.

"There is no need to supply more because the stocks are well," Algeria's Energy Minister Chakib Khelil told Reuters on the sidelines of industry function on Monday in Milan, Italy.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries meets on March 16 in Iran to review production policy.

A foreign affairs adviser to Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah said Monday current crude oil prices are "unrealistically high" and do not reflect any physical shortages in world markets.

Ministers are usually wary of pumping more crude going into the second quarter, as demand falls when the northern hemisphere winter draws to a close.

But the latest price rally to near-record levels prompted Nigeria to say on Friday that Opec may discuss next week an output increase or a relaxation of official production limits.

Opec is already pumping above its limit of 27 million barrels per day (bpd) at about 27.63 million bpd in February, a Reuters survey showed on Thursday.

Saudi Arabia accounted for a little more than three-quarters of the leakage above the formal ceiling, with production rising 190,000 bpd from January.

Central bankers from top developing and industrial countries said after a weekend meeting that they are keeping a wary eye on climbing oil costs, despite an upbeat overall outlook for world economic growth.

Last Friday, the New York Mercantile Exchange reported that noncommercial crude speculators boosted net long positions to a fresh eight-month high.

US Treasury Secretary John Snow said on Sunday that energy prices were "way, way too high," but that the US economy had been robust enough to weather the impact on growth. *Reuters*

Critics hammer US Fed's Greenspan

WASHINGTON—Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan is drawing such withering political fire for backing private Social Security accounts that his successor may opt to steer clear of offering fiscal advice, analysts say.

Greenspan, due to step down in January after more than 17 years at the Fed's helm, is usually an adept Washington hand.

But the vitriolic comments directed his way in recent days may serve as a shot across the bow to whoever follows in his wake.

"I'm not a Greenspan fan," Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid said on CNN last week. "I think he's one of the biggest political hacks we have in Washington."

In testimony to Congress in mid-February and again last week, Greenspan embraced US President George W. Bush's plan to let workers divert part of their Social Security taxes into investment accounts—a blessing Democrats think was motivated by ideology, not economics.

Greenspan's sins were compounded, in the eyes of Democrats, by testimony to a Bush-appointed tax overhaul panel last Thursday in which he said the US economy could benefit if the tax burden was more heavily placed on money spent rather than saved.

Senate Minority Whip Richard Durbin, an Illinois Democrat, told NBC on Sunday Reid's words "may have been slightly too strong."

Still, he complained Greenspan led Congress down the garden path in 2001 by giving a green light for Bush's large-scale tax-cutting plans.

Greenspan, who turned 79 on Sunday, has largely enjoyed an elevated status as the economic seer who led the US economy around rocky shoals to its longest-ever expansion.

Among the names most frequently mentioned as possible contenders for the Fed post, two—Harvard University's Martin Feldstein and former Bush adviser Glenn Hubbard—are fiscal experts, while a third—Fed Governor Ben Bernanke—is not known for keeping his views under wraps. *Reuters*

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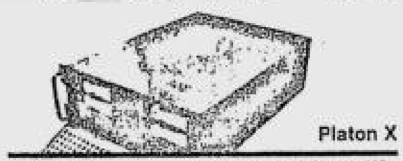

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Asian shares close flat

SINGAPORE—Asian share markets struggled near the flat line on Tuesday after Texas Instruments trimmed its profit forecast and investors sold some mining and oil stocks, dampening enthusiasm over a rise in US tech stocks.

Oil prices retreated from their climb toward $54 a barrel, while the US dollar and gold were steady in Asian trade after making slight gains overnight.

Japan's Nikkei stock index ended the morning session down 0.2 percent at 11,901.11.

It had gained 3.7 percent in the previous eight sessions on growing optimism over Japan's economy and the outlook for company earnings.

Shares of Texas Instruments Inc. fell more than 3 percent in after-hours trade as the world's largest maker of chips for cellular phones trimmed its quarterly profit forecast due to weak orders for its big-screen television chip business.

MSCI's index of non-Japan shares edged 0.2 percent higher and its world index inched up toward a four-year peak.

The dollar was steady near 104.97 yen compared with 105.18 yen in late New York trade. The euro fetched $1.3225, compared with $1.3207 late in New York.

Australia's main stock market index fell 0.07 percent after seven straight days of gains into record territory.

Elsewhere in the region, the Singapore Straits Times Index rose 0.17 percent and Taiwan's weighted index climbed 0.48 percent. South Korea's KOSPI index shed 0.14 percent.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index traded 0.5 percent lower amid ongoing political uncertainty over whether the territory's leader, Tung Chee-hwa, would confirm reports that he would resign.

In Japan, Sony Corp. shares added 2.7 percent on top of a 1.5-percent rise on Monday after the company announced a management overhaul.

The Texas Instruments news caused selling in semiconductor stocks such as Advantest Corp., which fell 0.9 percent.

Concerns also lingered in Korea from Samsung Electronics's warning on Monday that prices of liquid crystal displays for computers and TVs wouldn't recover until the fourth quarter.

Shares of the world's top flat-screen maker fell 0.39 percent. LG Electronics Inc. shed 2.94 percent and LG Philips LCD Co. Ltd. dropped 1.1 percent.

There was a countervailing trend in Taiwan, where shares in United Microelectronics Corp. rose 1.25 percent and rival Taiwan Semiconductor shares rose 2.27 percent. *Reuters*

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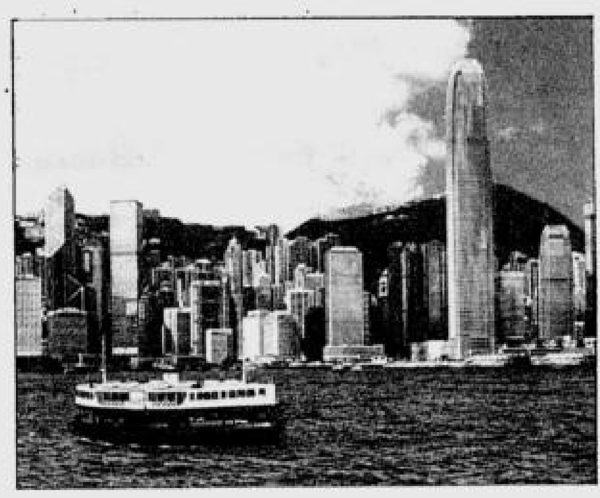

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DAY 3 Start your day with delicious *dim sum* in the morning. After which you can finish the day with a delicious barbeque buffet that is fit for a king.

DAY 4 Take an MTR ride in the morning with your Octopus Card that lets you travel anywhere in the city. Enjoy a close encounter with horses and then learn to become a champion jockey at the Racing Museum. Witness the Symphony of Lights for a night to remember for the whole family.

DAY 5 On your last day in Hong Kong, take pictures of your whole family with legendary characters and famous Hong Kong heroes at the Army Bunny Studio located in Whampoa. Then spend the whole afternoon shopping at some of the most famous shopping centres that Hong Kong has to offer. Then it's back to the hotel for some last minute packing and you're off to the airport.

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#1 LOVE RADIO

#2 YES FM

METRO MANILA
Coincidental Radio Survey
October 16 24, 2004

Monday to Sunday
Base: Total Radio Homes (21,357)

FM Stations	Rank	Rating	Audience Share
DZMB Love Radio	**1**	**2.9**	**20.9**
DWYS Yes FM	**2**	**2.5**	**17.8**
DWRR	3	1.6	11.3

METRO MANILA
Coincidental Radio Survey
October 16 24, 2004

Monday to Sunday
Base: Total Radio Homes (21,357)

AM Stations	Rank	Rating	Audience Share
DZRH	**1**	**0.7**	**4.8**
DZMM	2	0.6	4.6
DZBB	3	0.4	3.0

#1

Love Radio Iloilo
Aksyon Radyo Iloilo
Love Radio Tacloban
Aksyon Radyo Tacloban
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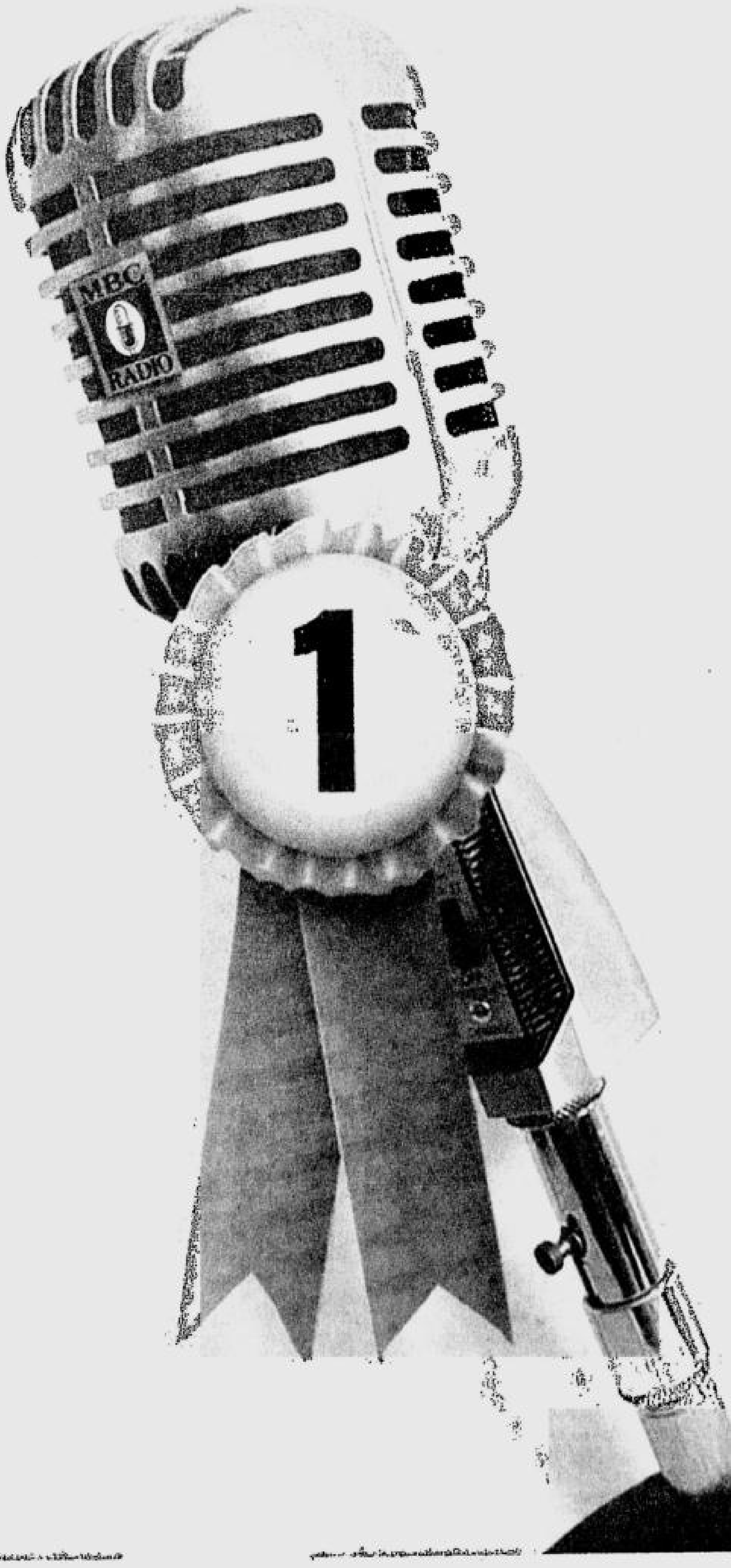

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RADYO NATIN

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E-mail: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph

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Is moonlighting ethical?

By Tita Datu Puangco

Advice
For the Anxious Person at Work

SOMETIME ago, I read an article in another job search website in which moonlighting was discussed. As far as I remember, the article listed some tips on "How to moonlight properly." My question now is, is there such a thing as moonlighting properly? The reason I'm asking is, I am now in a situation where, due to financial pressures, I am seriously considering doing this. But I have concerns on its ethical or moral issues.

I am presently working with a consulting firm as a technical personnel. Relative to my job, I've been coming across opportunities that would require me to practice my profession in a personal capacity and not as an employee (I am not sure if it would be similar to an accountant getting retainer services while remaining employed). Would that be unethical?

There are times that we will not have a project for a long time or worse—not even proposals to work on—especially when our salespeople decide that they would not be productive. These are the times that I'm tempted to take on "sidelines." I've been reasoning out that I'm not busy anyway.

There were also instances that I asked those that approached me in a personal capacity to deal with our company instead. Always, they would tell me that they prefer dealing with me on a personal basis because they simply cannot afford the cost of dealing with our company. If I refuse, they will just look for another personal consultant.

I am not sure if I have given you a clear picture of my situation, but that's just basically my dilemma now—whether to moonlight or not. I hope you can give me some advice soon.

Thank you very much and more power.

Ethical Consultant

Thank you for your letter. It demonstrates that there is hope for the Filipino. Your letter concerns the ethics of "moonlighting." I praise you for your ability to seek advice regarding this delicate matter.

US Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart defines ethics as "knowing the difference between what you have the right to do and what is the right thing to do." It involves an awareness of the consequences and possible implications of our actions.

There are generally accepted rules of ethical conduct such as the following:

1. Balance your personal needs with the needs of others or the needs of the organization. If you view a situation only from your self-interest and personal needs, you are likely to have a lopsided view of the situation.

2. Check out your company code of conduct or the personnel manual. If the rules are clear, then follow the rules. To circumvent rules does not pay. If the company is silent or your issue falls in a gray area, meet your boss to get clarification.

3. Analyze all aspects of the situation. Ask yourself how your superior, peers or subordinates will react to your potential action or decision. You can even go further to examine consequences to other stakeholders like customers, owners etc.

4. Try the ethics test. Ask yourself if the action is the right thing to do, if it is fair and honest to all concerned. Ask yourself if other ways or options exist in addressing your concerns.

Our company is engaged in training and consultancy. As a company we have a norm that encourages consultants to open up to managing consultants on problems similar to what you just presented. Transparency and openness on the situation at hand has allowed us to engage in ethical problem-solving. We resolve ethical dilemmas on a regular basis.

In situations where there is clear conflict of interest, we would advise a consultant to say no. For example, a potential client offers a consultant to take on personally a project at a lower rate undermining the company. In this case, the interest of the company is in direct conflict with the interest of the consultant.

However, there are times when a consultant is invited by a nonprofit organization to do a two-hour learning session. The budget for the affair is small. In this case, as a company we consider this type of engagement as promotions rather than strictly a project-for-profit engagement. However, we request full disclosure and a formal letter to be on file to record the mutual decision arrived at.

In your case, I can see a conflict of interest situation. I suggest you talk to your manager about your financial situation and engage him in joint problem-solving. One of the possible alternatives is "moonlighting" but there may be other options.

(*Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send feedback through e-mail to* advice@ancillaedc.com.ph *or fax to* 892-2902.)

ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

Basketball coach shows how teamwork can lead to winning in the workplace

By Candy G. Villanueva
Contributor

IN 1993, then 29-year-old Vincent "Chot" Reyes coached in the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA) for the first time and led the Purefoods team to bag the championship title. The next year, he brought the team to the finals twice and again secured a championship title. He won the Coach of the Year Award as a rookie coach and still holds the record as the youngest coach to win that title in his first try. Reyes was inarguably the hottest coach at that time. But he got too hot and Purefoods could no longer handle him. Reyes moved on with Sta. Lucia Realty's team to bring the group to heights nobody in the team dared imagine before. Indeed, he was at the top of his game and he made sure he was aptly compensated for it. He demanded a huge increase, a brand new German car and perks other coaches could only dream of. Sta. Lucia Realty happily complied. Two months later, he lost his job.

Reyes went from being at the top of his game to the lowest point in his life. In a span of one year, he got fired twice. These unexpected events brought Reyes to rethink his outlook in life. It made him realize that winning is not about being ahead but dedicating one's self to a vision and a purpose. It was ironic because when he got booted out of his team, he finally understood what teamwork was all about.

Today, he brings this winning outlook from the basketball court to the business world where his company offers corporate coaching. In Francis Kong's Third Achievers and Leaders Seminar held early this year, the coach shared his thoughts on bagging the gold and taking the shots as a team in the corporate court.

Team identity

Teamwork, according to Reyes, entails a lot of hard work. If it doesn't, then it would be called "team easy" or even "team play." Founder of Coachcom.Inc., a company dedicated in making champions out of corporate and business teams, Reyes believes that a team should work on three important elements. The team should consider who are the members of the team, what is the task at hand and how they are going to go about it.

"I think the most important thing is the identity of a team. A team's most compelling tool is who it is," shares Reyes. A team should be anchored by principles and values as a foundation. According to the coach, if this internal foundation is not laid out, no amount of technique can compensate. He cites his experience as an example.

REYES ROSE RAZON/CONTRIBUTOR

Reyes is the only Filipino member of the International Advisory Board of the United States Basketball Academy and a member of the Board of the Basketball Coaches Association of the Philippines. A seasoned coach, he has attended several coaching clinics in the United States and has been in the company of basketball greats like Phil Jackson. Yet, in a span of a year, he was fired twice.

"I stayed with what I knew was right, what I felt was right. I failed to realize that it was important for me to understand who my players were, what kind of players I had, who I am." All his training and experience came to naught. This proves that a team leader can attend all the programs, learn all the techniques and go to all the team-building seminars but if he or she does not know who the team is, everything else fails.

Purpose driven

Higher sales, faster work processes. Whatever it is, a team has a specific purpose. Be it less turnovers, which is great for basketball teams or high turnovers, which is great for businesses, every activity and exercise must be towards this end. "We must have a compelling vision for being. Something that is going to bind us and unite us. In the end, something that we ask ourselves, what is it that we can do that if we achieve it it's going to be bigger than all of us combined? It's really going to be different, remembered, and historic."

Reyes emphasizes that the team leader's job is to feed that vision to his people. He believes that every member should be involved in whatever purpose the team has embraced. When Reyes' Coca-Cola Tigers team in the PBA won the All-Filipino Cup championship, it became a historic achievement because they were the first team to gain the title on their first year in the league. They started out with a common purpose and commitment.

Building steps

The "how" in the team-building equation simply refers to the steps towards the common goal. Reyes follows four simple guidelines: value of vision, picking people, sharpening skills and creating cohesion. Again, he reiterates the importance of revisiting objectives and having a clear picture of what kind of a team a group wants to be.

A degree holder in Interdisciplinary Studies from the Ateneo de Manila University and an MBA student at the Edinburg Business School in Scotland, Reyes chooses members for his team by picking people who can work as a team. "When you hire people, when you put your teams together, don't look only at their hard skills or their obvious abilities, look at their teammanship. Look at their ability to work with people."

In his greatest challenge yet as coach of the Philippine National Team, he put together three previous coaches of the National Team—Norman Black, Tim Cone and Jong Uichoco. These three are basketball veterans who have won more championships and awards than he has but they volunteered to be his assistant coaches. "It takes an unbelievable amount of humility, strength of character and genuine goodwill for a head coach to voluntarily go and offer his services as an assistant coach and I am the youngest in that." It is a sight to behold, according to Reyes, to watch the National Team practice as these basketball greats work together humbly yet efficiently for a common and noble goal.

To sharpen skills, Reyes advises to push the boundaries of the comfort zone without leaving one's gift zone. The gift zone, according to leadership expert John Maxwell, is where one is intuitive. It is where one is natural. Reyes has been coaching since 1982. He has pushed beyond his comfort zone by going into corporate coaching without going beyond his gift zone because coaching and teaching is what he loves best. His final advice is "If you want to develop your team, develop yourself first. It's about personal development. If you want to lead your team, lead yourself first. Are we willing to pay the price?"

(*Send feedback to* candyvillanueva@pldtdsl.net)

Ateneo CORD offers special HR courses

THE ATENEO Center for Organization Research and Development (CORD) is offering three special courses for the month of March and April. These introductory courses are especially helpful for fresh graduates, line managers, and beginners in the HR field.

The first program entitled the Training Assistant Development Program is a two-day (March 10 to 11) workshop designed to equip individuals with skills in coordinating, preparing and documenting training workshops. The Organization Development for Line Managers program scheduled on March 30, 31 and April 1, is directed towards enabling participants in understanding and appreciating the process of organization development. They will be oriented with the various organizational diagnosis methods, OD interventions, how to manage change and deal with resistance. Finally, the Managing Human Capital program (April 13 to 15) is a short course designed to provide a basic understanding of human resources management. Modules include an overview of the different facets of HR such as the human resources information system, employee selection, performance and rewards management, employee development and employee relations and well-being.

For more information, contact Ateneo CORD, 2/F Höffner Building, Social Development Complex, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City. Contact numbers are (632) 426-5931, 426-6282, fax no. (632) 426-6065. Or e-mail ateneocord@admu.edu.ph or visit www.ateneocord.org.

Entrepreneurship training for youth becomes a hit in Asia

By P. Parameswaran

WASHINGTON—When American businessman Steve Mariotti was assaulted by a student gang for a paltry $10, he did not go to the police. He threw his job and started a business training scheme to help students from low-income communities make money the right way.

Two decades after the life-altering incident, his programs have become immensely popular in the United States and are catching on in Europe, Africa and Asia, where governments are desperately trying to find jobs for their expanding youth population.

Street-smarts training

"Our program transforms street smarts into business smarts," said ex-Brooklyn trader Mariotti, the founder and president of the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (referred to as Nifty for NFTE).

Devised initially to prevent dropout and improve academic performance among pupils at risk of failing or quitting school, NFTE's "entrepreneurship education" schemes now cater to a wider group of mostly middle and high school students in the United States.

The programs are a hit because they are down-to-earth. Class activities include games on the benefits of global trade, business negotiation skills and using basic items like a sandwich to break down the cost of goods and labor. Intricate mathematics, for example, is simplified to instill marketing and salesmanship skills.

"It's all about tricks of the trade yet stressing culture of ownership and self-employment," explained Victor Salama, NFTE's director of program partnerships.

Asian expansion

The foundation now offers programs in more than 600 high schools and middle schools in the United States and about 80 programs in 11 countries, including the world's most populous nations China and India.

In China, particularly, they are attractive to young adults, including single moms, handicapped communities and prisoners. Elsewhere in Asia, participants have come from Singapore and the Philippines.

The foundation, backed by such sponsors as Microsoft and The Goldman Sachs Foundation, is set to launch a scheme in South Korea in March as part of an Asian expansion.

NFTE has signed a licensing pact with Young Professionals Institute of Korea (YPIK) and an agreement with its sister organization Y and P Publishing Co. for translating the curriculum.

YPIK is sponsored by the Korean Junior Chamber and its members affiliated with NFTE are professors at some leading universities.

Popular in Asia

Salama said NFTE programs were becoming popular in Asia because they could help contain the serious problem of unemployment among youth in the region.

Most American students involved in NFTE are 14-to-16-year-olds but in China and India, the age group rises up to 24 years, including secondary school dropouts, Salama said.

To penetrate internationally, NFTE relies on partners with a good understanding of local accounting practices, business operation procedures and cultural norms.

Some 1,124 NFTE alumni have trained and completed their business plans in China since the foundation launched programs about one and a half years ago through local partner Bright China Management Institute.

Success stories

Wang Dechun, a 25-year-old daughter of peasants from Henan Province, was an apprentice hairdresser until she joined an NFTE training program that gave her the confidence to set up her own hairdressing business.

She said she was now running "the most profitable barbershop around the neighborhood." In India, where NFTE has been working since 2000 with local nongovernmental organization "I Create," 15,000 people have undergone business training so far.

They are now involved in businesses ranging from manufacturing leather goods and selling refurbished textbooks, to running a micro-credit program for Indian women in rural villages.

The target is to train over one million people in India over the next five years.

"The only way to stop India's huge unemployment rate from rising further is to create entrepreneurs—who, in turn, create jobs and employ other people," said Harsh Bhargava, the founder of I Create.

Each year, 20 million youths in India enter the job market and over the next two decades, the country will have the largest number of working-age people in the world.

Leadership training

Youth entrepreneurship programs such as NFTE are particularly effective at keeping students from low-income urban backgrounds on the academic track and can be a significant force in driving them toward high achievement and leadership, according to research by the prestigious Harvard University.

When compared to a control group, NFTE graduates are 30 times more likely to start their own businesses, and they are 20 times more knowledgeable about entrepreneurship and basic business concepts, said another US study, by Brandeis University.

"Aside from training, a key aspect of encouraging youngsters to enter business is removing barriers," said Salama. "Unlike in the United States, many countries still charge various fees, beyond taxes, for those who want to start a business."

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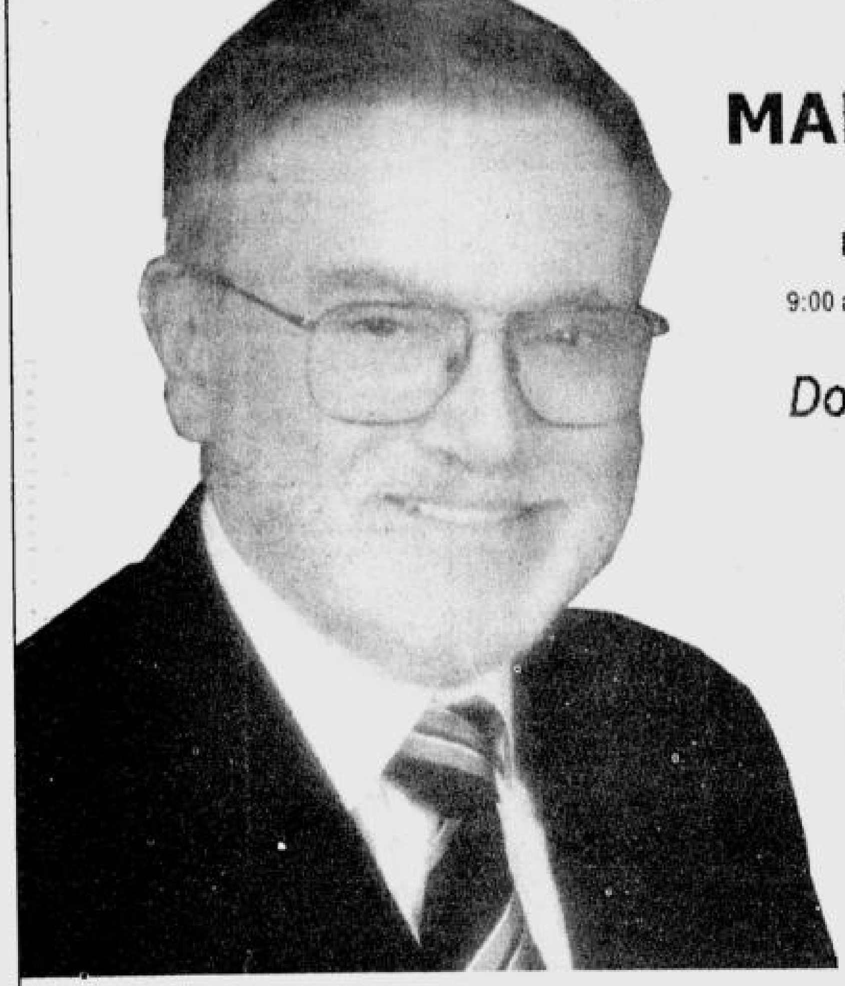

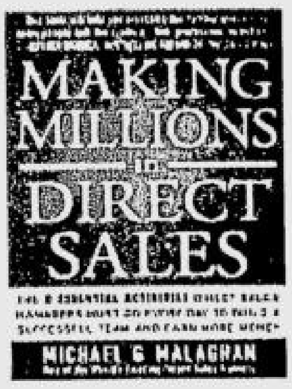
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4WD TWIN CAB PICK-UP FOR STARCM PCK-05-01

Support to Agrarian Reform Communities in Central Mindanao (STARCM) intends to award a supply contract for Four (4) units 4WD Twin cab Pick-Up to its Project Management Office in Kidapawan City with financial assistance from the ALA programme of the European Communities. The tender dossier is available from STARCM-PMO, 3rd Floor, ROMA Building, Quezon Boulevard, Kidapawan City, Tel. (064) 278-4009; Fax (064) 278-4252; Email: starcm@philcom.ph. The deadline for submission of tenders is 17:00H April 08, 2005.

(PDI–March 9, 2005)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
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Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites interested suppliers who are (a) duly licensed Filipino citizens/ sole proprietorships; or (b) 60% Filipino owned partnerships/corporations; or (c) two or more suppliers forming into joint ventures jointly and severally liable; or (d) cooperatives duly registered with the CDA; with largest single contract, similar to the items for bid, for the last 2 years, at least equal to 50% of the approved budget; and with Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) at least equal to the approved budget, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following items:

ITB No.	Item / Description	Approved Budget	Source of Funds
2005-036	800 units Personal Computer 76 units Laptop Computers	P 34,400,000.00 P 7,500,325.00	LBP Funds LBP Funds
2005-054	Two Years Lease of Sanitizers, Air Fresheners (gel type) and Liquid Soap Dispensers complete with installation and the supply of environment friendly sanitizing agents, fresheners and liquid soap for the following:	P 2,616,000.00	LBP Funds

- Water Closet : 247 units - one (1) Sanitizer each
- Urinal : 88 units - one (1) Sanitizer each
- Comfort Room : 138 CRs - one (1) Soap Dispenser each
  - one (1) Air Freshener each

Bidding of the above requirements is scheduled on March 30, 2005 at 1:00 p.m. and the Bid Documents may be obtained from the Procurement Division of the General Services Department, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P5,000.00 and P1,000.00 for ITB numbers 2005-036 and 2005-054, respectively.

Interested suppliers are requested to attend the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on March 17, 2005 at the 25th Floor, Conference Room, LANDBANK Plaza, Malate, Manila.

All particulars relative to the Qualification/Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Only those bidders who comply with the Bank's requirements shall be eligible to participate in the bidding.

LANDBANK reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure or waive any defect or informality and to accept bids as may be considered most advantageous to the Bank.

COMMITTEE ON BIDS AND AWARDS

(PDI–March 2 & 9, 2005)

PSTD opens call for presentations from leading HRD practitioners worldwide

(PSTD Hosts the ARTDO International Management and HRD Conference in Manila in September, 2005)

THE Philippine Society for Training and Development (PSTD) announces call for presentations for the 32nd ARTDO International Management and HRD Conference to be held on Sept. 7- 9, at the Manila Hotel.

The three-day event will assemble leading HRD practitioners in Asia and beyond to explore emerging technologies, trends, issues in the training and development field in the light of influences of globalization and technological advancement. Leading practitioners in training and development are invited to submit their presentation proposals.

Proposals may be in any of the following tracks: global practices, emerging trends and issues, innovative approaches, personal and professional effectiveness, technical training and training fundamentals.

The conference will be the biggest gathering of trainers, training managers/directors and HRD professionals. More than 200 foreign delegates and some 400 delegates from all over the Philippines are expected to attend. PSTD will also celebrate its 40th year coinciding with the event.

Interested presenters may visit the PSTD web site at www.pstd.org and download a copy of the Call for Presentation form. Proposals must be submitted to the PSTD Secretariat at secretariat@pstd.org on or before March 23.

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Tawi-Tawi
Municipality of Sitangkai

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Government of the Philippines through the Department of Land Reform (DLR) has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) toward the cost of Agrarian Reform Communities Project (ARCP). It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contracts of Rural Infrastructure Component for which this Invitation to apply for Eligibiity and to Bid is issued
2. The Municipality of Sitangkai, Tawi-Tawi as implementing partner of the DLR to ARCP, invites sealed offers/quotations for the supply of various construction materials from eligible suppliers for the Sibutu Potable Water Supply.

   a. Package-A ABC = Php 5,543,895.10 b. Package-B ABC = Php 354,461.36
3. For more details, please inquire from Local Project Office (LPO) Sibutu, Sitangkai, Tawi-Tawi or to previous publication dated March 2, 2005 on PDI.
4. Bid Tender maybe purchased at the ARCP Local Project Office (LPO) for a non-Refundable fee of Php3,000.00 during office hours from March 15-22, 2005.
5. Pre-bid Conference will be held on March 29, 2005 at 2:00 P.M. at the Municipal Hall.
6. Offers of Quotations shall be valid for a period of one hundred twenty (120) days after opening of quotations and must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of Cash (1%) or GSIS Bond (2.50% of the approved budget for the contract) and shall be delivered to the Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee, Municipality of Sitangkai, Province of Tawi-Tawi on or before April 11, 2005 at 2:00 P.M
7. Unless otherwise indicate in the Instruction to Bidders or other bidding and contract documents all particulars relative to the procurement and contract implementation shall be governed by RA 9184 and its IRR-A.
8. The implementing agency reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any minor defects therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the government

(Sgd.) MAHDUM T. SAMUDDIN
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(PDI–March 9, 2005)

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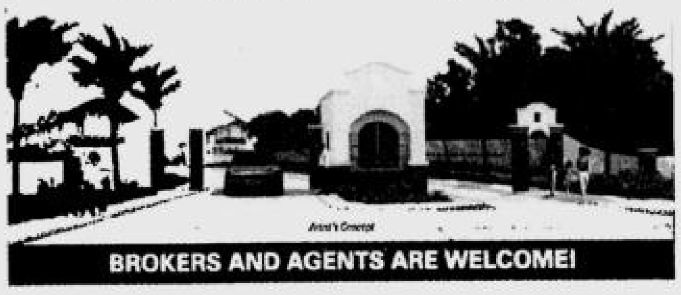

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QUEZON CITY

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given of the Extrajudicial Settlement of the Estate of LUDIVINA PINEDA with Waiver of Shares executed by the heirs on May 20, 2003, acknowledged before Atty. Elsa Verdadero Perlas, Notary Public in and for the City of Pasig, entered in her notarial register as Doc. No. 934, Page No. 13, Book No. CVI, Series of 2003.
(PDI-March 2, 9 & 16, 2005)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice of Loss: Capitol Hills Golf & Country Club Stock Cert. 776-B 1 share under the name of Jose Ramon Moll was declared lost. If no contest received w/in 1 yr new cert will be issued. (PDI- March 2, 9 & 16, 2005)

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- Loves to cook
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John 3:16

SOLEDAD DEL PRADO

(Viuda de Antonio Aspillera)

Entregó su alma al Señor el Sábado 5 de Marzo, en el Makati Medical Center.
Sus restos mortales estaran en St. Alphonsus de Ligouri,
Capilla 2 (Magallanes Village, Makati) a partir del Domingo 6 de Marzo.
Misas: Domingo dia 6, Lunes dia 7, Martes dia 8 y
Miercoles dia 9 de Marzo, las seis y media de la tarde (6:30 PM).
El entierro tendrá lugar despiés de la Misa que se
celebrará el Jueves dia 10 de Marzo las ocho de la mañana (8AM).

Sus hijos desconsolados
Carlos
Maria Angela
Regina y Paul Ligones
Isabel y Jose Macicior
Anthony y Kathleen (Mendezona)

"GOD knows what is in your heart,
And what you need
He knows how much you can bear
And He will give you strength
And fill you with his grace
As He walks with you every step of the way
He is surrounding you with his love
And holding you gently in the palm of His hands."

CHIEF SUPT. DOMINADOR M. MANGUBAT, JR., MD

DIRECTOR (RET.), PNP MEDICAL SERVICES
NOV. 13, 1933 – MARCH 8, 2005

To our relatives & friends and all those who have made his life complete, to come join us -

His beloved wife **Daisy**, children **Royce & Malu**
Rex & Grace, Marc & Cynthia and **Joy**
Grandchildren **David, Mari, Ina, Bettine, Jonas & Claire**
His brother **Rene & Long**, nieces, nephews & grandchildren.

In prayer for his unity with our LORD.

Daddy's remains will be at the family residence (Isidro Mangubat Street, Dasmariñas, Cavite) and will be interred at the Family Mausoleum on Friday after the 10 am Mass at the Immaculate Concepcion Parish Church.

In Loving Memory

OFELIA DE LEON RENDON

Born September 8, 1925
peacefully passed away in the
grace of our Lord on March 5, 2005.

Sadly missed by husband **Angel**; children **Ramon Raul & Erlinda Nuqui, Dennis & Joseph & Teresa Borja, Maria Lourdes & Peter Paul Mejorada, Eduardo Sixto & Shiela Obliga**; grandchildren, brothers & sisters, relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Interment will be held on Saturday, March 12, 2005, at the Roxas City Catholic Cemetery after the 2 p.m. Mass at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish Church.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. John 14:6

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NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF UNSERVICEABLE ITEMS

"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

DATE OF BIDDING: March 22, 2005, 2:00 PM, Solarium Hall, Building-1, Ground Floor NPC-Head Office, Agham Road corner Quezon Ave., Diliman, Q.C.

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding for the sale of the following:

ITEM	DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION	MIN. BID PRICE
	Schedule I	
-1-	One (1) Lot: Unserviceable, Used and Junk Substation Equipment (OCB, GCB, CT, PT, DS); General Plant Equipment and Parts, Assorted Scrap Metals and Power Cables. Located at NPC Bataan TPP compound and at TRANSCO Limay Substation stockyard, Barangay Luz, Limay Town, Bataan Province.	P1,169,590.00 per lot
	Schedule II	
-1-	One (1) Lot: Unserviceable Power Transformer with "PCB-Free" Transformer Oil and Junk General Plant Equipment, Used Automotive/Diesel Engine Parts, Busted Lead-Acid Batteries and Assorted Scrap Metals. Located at NPC SPUG Office, KM-36 Newtown Road, Brgy. Minuyan, San Jose Del Monte City (Bulacan). Note: This disposal/sale is limited to EMB-DENR accredited Transporters and/or TSD Facility Operators (Treaters) only.	P212,985.00 per lot
	Schedule III	
-1-	One (1) Lot: Unserviceable Steel Tower Parts, Junk Substation Equipment and Empty Steel Drums. Located at TRANSCO Kalayaan EHV Substation, Caliraya, Laguna Province.	P885,000.00 per lot

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S/ CASHIER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL PRICE OFFER.
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN (2003 or 2004) ORIGINAL OR CERTIFIED XEROX COPY FOR THE BIDDER OR AN AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE COMPANY.
3. EMB-DENR ACCREDITATIONS FOR INTERESTED PARTIES TO SCHEDULE-II

All interested parties who wish to secure the bid forms for this public bidding must present a valid Income Tax Return (2003/2004 original or BIR certified copy) and valid identification card with picture (such as Company IDs, Passport, Driver's License, PRC Licensure Card, etc.). Those who secured the bid forms for Schedule-II of the February 24, 2005 public bidding will be issued the new bid forms of Schedule-I free of charge. Interested parties for Schedule-II must present original EMB-DENR accreditations.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P500.00/set from Mr. S.V. Lomuntad, Jr./Mr. Al Plata at MMD, Ground Floor, Bldg.-1, NPC Head Office, Corner Agham Road and Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City or call telephone no. 924-5384. Deadline for issuance of the bid forms is until 4:30 PM, March 21, 2005.

For the Materials Management Department

(Sgd.) FELIX B. TACATA, JR.
OIC, MMD

(PDI - March 7, 8 & 9, 2005)

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BUSINESS

PHILIPPINE DEVELOPMENT FORUM

RP confident it can attain zero-deficit goal

By Michelle V. Remo

GOVERNMENT may be keeping its original target of attaining a zero budget deficit by 2010, but it is actually aiming to close the gap earlier than planned.

"There is an opportunity to accelerate this (attainment of the target)," Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima said during the Philippine Development Forum in Davao City yesterday. "We will keep our targets, but we are really aiming to go beyond the numbers."

Finance officials are hoping to wipe out the huge budget deficit as early as 2008.

During the forum, the government also elicited the support of foreign creditors in injecting health into the country's weak fiscal sector.

According to Purisima, foreign creditors, led by the World Bank, have expressed interest in pursuing a fiscal responsibility program for the Philippines.

The program would come in the form of financial support and technical assistance to help the government become more capable in addressing its budget problems.

According to the finance chief, the fiscal target for the medium term still do not take into account the additional revenues to be generated from the legislative and administrative measures that the Arroyo administration is pushing for to put the government's fiscal house in order.

The measures include the reform in the value-added tax system. The executive branch wants an increase in the VAT rate from 10 to 12 petcent, and to expand the coverage of the tax to include more products and services.

The Lower House has already approved the proposal, but the Senate has expressed favor only on the plan to remove VAT exemption of various products and services.

The government is expecting P35 billion a year from a 2-percentage-point increase in the VAT rate, and over P28 billion annually from the plan to expand its coverage.

"If the VAT measure, for example, is passed early enough, then the deficit numbers can drop substantially," he said.

Besides VAT, the executive branch has also initiated administrative programs to raise more revenue.

These include the enhancement of the auditing capabilities of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs, and the increase in fees and charges collected by government agencies.

Aside from the zero-budget deficit, the national government also hopes to reduce the deficit of the entire public sector to 3 percent of the gross domestic product within the medium term.

Last year, the consolidated public sector deficit (CPSD), which also includes deficit of state-owned companies and fiscal performance of local government units, was estimated to have reached P263.217 billion, or 5.4 percent of the GDP.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo shakes the hands of Joachim von Amsberg, World Bank country director while Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, Presidential Adviser for Mindanao Jesus Durez, and Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima look on. Top business and government officials were on hand for the Philippines Development Forum held at the Marco Polo hotel in Davao City. EDWIN BACASMA

This year, the official CPSD target is P253.632 billion, or 4.8 percent of the GDP.

Purisima said all the proceeds that would be collected in 2005 from the administrative and legislative revenue-raising measures would be used to reduce the deficit.

Projects such as on infrastructure, he said, would be financed by the privatization of government assets.

He said the government would strengthen its privatization program. The government would soon form a team within the Department of Finance to focus only on selling government assets.

A new finance undersecretary, Jay Singson, has been tapped by Purisima to head the DOF privatization team.

Once Singson assumes the post, the privatization team will come up with a lineup of government assets to be privatized and define a revenue target to be generated from the sales, Purisima said.

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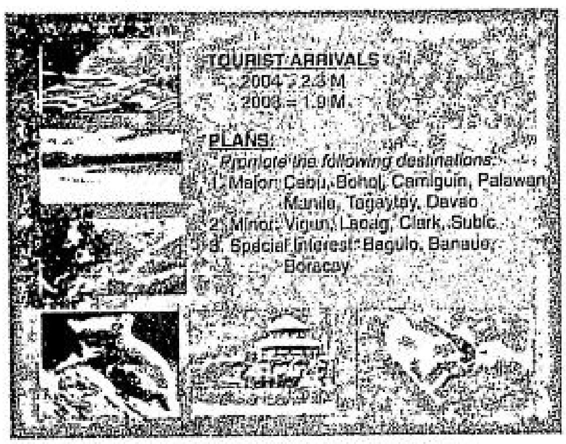
INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Tourism

(2003 & 2004)



TOURIST ARRIVALS
2004 = 2.3 M
2003 = 1.9 M

PLANS:
Promote the following destinations:
1. Major: Cebu, Bohol, Camiguin, Palawan, Manila, Tagaytay, Davao
2. Minor: Vigan, Laoag, Clark, Subic
3. Special Interest: Baguio, Banaue, Boracay

Sources: Department of Tourism, Medium Term Philippine Development Plan

Although it is growing, the number of tourist arrivals in the Philippines still lags behind the 10 million visitors that Thailand and Malaysia is attracting yearly. The target is to increase tourist arrivals to 5 million and generate 3 - 6 million jobs in the process. Aside from the economic benefits, another reason cited by the government for promoting tourism is its ability to improve the country's image to the international community.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

3-yr T-bond rate drops to 10.5%

BACKED with a high level of liquidity, banks swamped the auction for the three-year Treasury bond yesterday, pulling down its rate to only 10.5 percent.

The new rate for the three-year T-bond was 87,5 basis points lower than the 11.375 percent recorded during its previous auction in November last year.

The domestic capital market showed strong appetite for the three-year debt instrument, as bids for the government security reached P17.3386 billion, or more than double the government's offering of only P8 billion.

"The market is very liquid," said Omar Cruz in his first press briefing as head of the government's Treasury. "It's hard to give a timetable (as to how long the market will stay awash with cash), but certainly we have more than enough liquidity."

The positive response of the market to the government's debt offering yesterday came after the announcement of the January deficit data, which was well within the ceiling set by economic managers.

The national government's budget deficit for the first month of the year stood at only P16.5 billion. The figure was 21 percent better than the average of the P25-billion deficit that the government should achieve for each of the first three months of the year so as not to exceed the deficit ceiling of P77.8 billion for the first quarter.

Cruz said he would also take charge of the government's foreign borrowings after the responsibility was assigned to him by Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima.

Before he was appointed as national treasurer, Cruz was responsible for domestic borrowings.

Finance Undersecretary Eric Recto, who has resigned and will stay on in the DOF only until March 15, was previously in charge of the government's foreign borrowings and privatization of government assets. After he leaves, Purisima is expected to name a new finance undersecretary to take charge of privatization.

Cruz said that for the meantime, the Treasury would be sticking to the original foreign borrowing of the government. The government has set to borrow $4 billion from the foreign credit market for this year, $1.5 billion of which was already raised during a bond float in January.

Recto earlier said the government was planning to complete the foreign borrowing requirement by doing another bond float either in the middle or second half of the year. *Michelle V. Remo*

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MOTORING

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

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An uphill climb breaks the myth of 'Filipino time'

THE MIATA of SUV at home in its environ

By Tessa R. Salazar

IF A RACE against time meant getting from point A to point B "on time," then we could dare any F1 racer right in their faces: "beat this."

Twenty-seven motoring journalists recently faced the challenge posed by the Mazda Tribute Hill Climb Test Drive in Subic: drive the "Miata of SUVs" through a 1.5-km stretch of grass peppered with hills and tight turns in exactly 1 minute and 25 seconds. No more, no less.

It was the simplest of rules. Eventually, we would find out it was one of the hardest to follow.

We were given two chances to try and come out on top and on the dot. We tried out first on the 2.3-liter version of the Tribute, and the second heat was on the 3-liter variant.

Latecomers

Right from the start, I and two other writers were placed at a disadvantage. We were unfortunate enough to have arrived late for the event, which blew any chances of us latecomers getting any trial runs. So, without the benefit of having had even a short glimpse of the course, I sat behind the 2.3-liter Tribute and poised to conquer my own "Achilles heel."

Former rally driver Joey Lanuza was my navigator. And he wasn't smiling. I put in my fave Queen CD, and the late great Freddie Mercury belted out "Under Pressure," with David Bowie (still alive and kicking, lucky him) providing the lyrical bass. That soothed me, but not Joey, who seemed to cringe with the added pressure two queer guys singing about society's pressures on humanity.

A choice

My worry wasn't on the frustrated animal beside me, but for my run on the course to be rudely interrupted by monkeys, snakes or monitor lizards crossing my path. Though it was a secured and private course, this was still Subic where families of monkeys frolicked beside the well-paved roads, waiting for curious motorists to throw them a peanut or two.

And if it came down to a choice between perfecting my run and saving a creature's life by slamming on the brakes, I would choose the latter with the anti-lock brake system with the electronic brake force distribution and brake assist features doing the rest of the stuff.

False start

Inquirer columnist Andre Palma was counting me down at the starting line. Five... four...three...Overeager, I jumped the gun. Andre frowned as he ordered me back to the starting line. His lips pouted and I could make out the words "no monkeying around" form in them as if in slow motion.

I smiled, while Freddie shrieked "Why don't we give love that one more chance?" from the CD player. Andre then radioed the sentries at the finish line for the false start, and he counted down again. This time I got it right: "Two, one, go!" And I throttled off.

Animals with cameras did line up along the way, following our every twist and turn. But no real monkeys dared cross our path, despite the warnings posted beside the rough course every now and then. Maybe they were all waiting at the finish line, eagerly awaiting the pop of the champagne bottle.

Not bad

Despite its high ground clearance, the Tribute read my intentions well and handled admirably. Its carlike handling served it well on the many sensitive turns of the course, where one false move could have made us end in the ditch.

We arrived at the finish line in 1:28, three minutes off the ideal. Not bad, according to grinning colleagues Armin Amio, Raul Asuncion, Dennis Santos and Barry Ortiz. I could have arrived three hours late, if I went by my usual routine, they chuckled. Ha-ha. Not funny.

Well, I personally considered that my familiarization tour of the course. And I thought I'd do much better on the 3L.

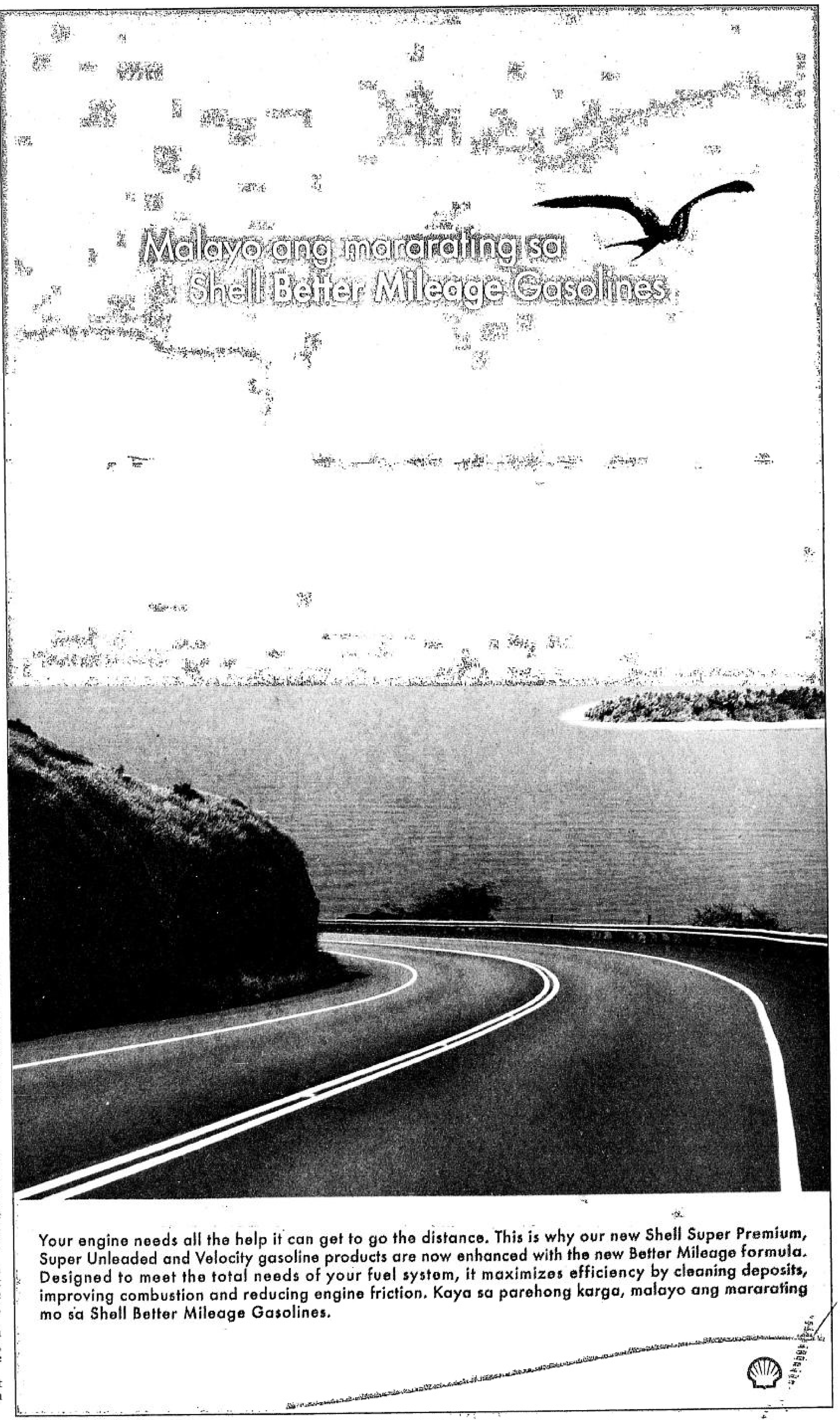
More predictable

The 3-liter Tribute felt a bit heavier, but was "more predictable," and surprisingly exhibited the same agility on the steering wheel. And at the end of my run (navigated by Dennis this time), I really did better, clocking in at 1:25.65—just over six tenths of a second off the ideal. That time, however, would be paltry compared to my colleagues, some of whom clocked in at 1:25 flat.

Ugh. Were they born with atomic clocks in their heads or what? As always, the late great Freddie had a ready answer from beyond the CD player: "It's a kind of magic...(snap, snap)...A kind of magic..."

As for me, I was just happy that I was "in sync" with the Tribute, and that no animals, bipeds or otherwise, were harmed during the event.

It was just too bad we only had peanuts at the finish line. Champagne would have been nice for time-starved animals like us.



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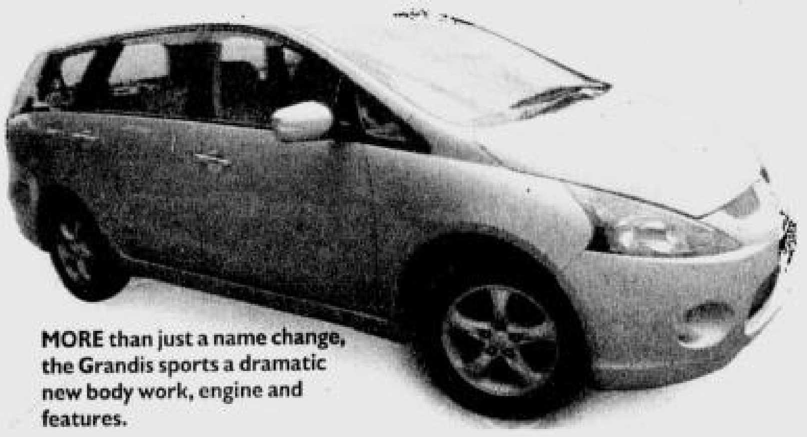
Grandis: A trump card up Mitsubishi's sleeve

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

AFTER THREE generations of the Space Wagon, Mitsubishi changed the name of this '80s (and also '90s) popular multi-purpose vehicle to Grandis, but it is more than just a name change.

The Grandis breaks new ground with a dramatic new bodywork, new 2.4-liter Mivec engine, a revised Invecs-II four-speed automatic transmission, and a longer and more spacious passenger compartment.

"What we are trying to prove is that while the Grandis is still an MPV through and through, it doesn't need to be square and dull," says Mitsubishi Motors Philippines marketing services AVP Froy Dytianquin.



MORE than just a name change, the Grandis sports a dramatic new body work, engine and features.

Inspiration

The boldness of the Grandis' design can be attributed to Mitsubishi's former chief designer Olivier Boulay, who took the Space Liner and CZ3 Tarmac concept cars (presented during the 2001 Tokyo Motor Show) as his inspiration.

According to the master designer, the Grandis' futuristic design offers a combination of sportiness and unbeatable versatility, a balance of athleticism and carrying comfort.

The design should appeal to those families that need more space but still want to enjoy themselves when they're behind the wheel, according to Boulay.

"Indeed, the Grandis successfully combines family duties and fun in a single appealing package," adds MMPC brand advertising supervisor Arlan Antonio Reyes Jr.

Mivec engine

To match the futuristic design, Mitsubishi fitted the new Grandis with a new type of engine: a 2.4 Mivec engine (which stands for Mitsubishi Innovative Valve timing Electronic Control system).

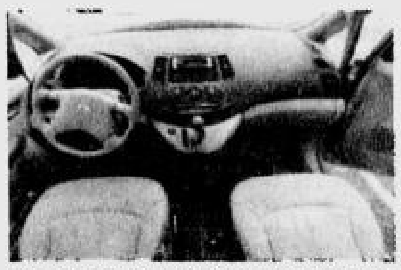
A true performer, this type of engine (replacing the previous gasoline direct injection engine) makes power performance and environmental protection compatible.

"The Mivec's dual-intake valve camshaft enables changing between low-speed and high-speed modes, resulting in easy operation from low to high rpms, improving the driving experience when starting from a stop light, merging onto the freeway, or accelerating to overtake another car," reveals Dytianquin.

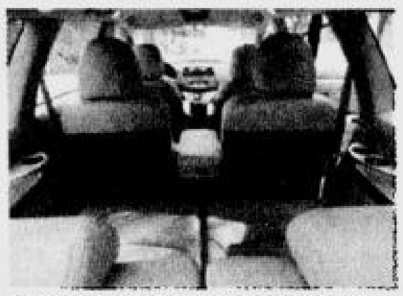
This means, at low ranges, the Mivec uses a low/medium cam profile that maximizes fuel-efficiency, torque and low-end pick-up while minimizing exhaust emissions.

At high ranges (that's above 3,600 rpm), the Mivec engine switches to a high cam profile that results to high power and torque output (165 PS at 6,000 rpm and 22.1 kg-m at 4,000, respectively).

Dytianquin says that the Mivec is an impressive technology, "which is not terribly complex yet is very efficient at providing additional performance without an appreciable penalty in fuel economy or emissions."



FROM THE DRIVER'S point of view, the Grandis could be a futuristic spacecraft.



IF not transporting seven people, the seats can be folded or arranged to accommodate cargo of all shapes and sizes.

Futuristic

From the driver's point of view, the Grandis could be a futuristic spacecraft—the ultra cool backlit instruments glow like a gauges on the space shuttle's console.

The dashboard features a "wave" design pattern with high-tech looking metallic deçor panels around.

"The interior of the Grandis was designed to create a modern living space, providing maximum relaxation and enjoyment for the driver and passengers alike," reveals Reyes.

Even safety was placed high in designing the Grandis' interiors—a testing done by the tough Japan New Car Assessment Program (JNCAP) standards returned with six-star performance, the highest available, for the Grandis.

Smooth and more refined

In terms of ride and comfort, the Grandis is smooth and more refined than the SpaceWagon it replaces.

Driver seating is lower than in the previous generation of similar models and the position of the steering is more in line with sedan cars than an upright position common in tall vehicles.

The passenger compartment is also longer and more spacious. Each of the middle and rear seat passengers have their own reading lamp and air vent.

The third row of seats also folds smartly into a compartment in the floor and completely disappears, adding more cargo room.

The third row folds completely flat under the floor while the second row folds and slides forward to provide enough room for a couple of luggage.

"With all these features and at P1.48 million, the Grandis is definitely one of the more cost-effective large MPVs on the market today," says Reyes.

Tax breaks for safer cars

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

TWO weeks before his untimely death last Thursday, Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) president Tony Mapa faxed to me a statement from Max Mosley, president of the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA). Ever the unassuming gentleman who never imposed, Tony casually suggested that I might want to use the FIA statement in a future column.

Even without Tony's endorsement, this column would have featured the FIA statement since it pushes an idea with life-saving potential. The FIA, if you don't know it yet, is the governing body for Formula One, the World Rally Championship and other major motor sport events. Consisting of 160 national auto clubs in 120 countries representing more than 100 million people, the FIA, whose head office is in Paris, strives to defend the interests of motorists worldwide, improve road safety and encourage the transfer of safety lessons from racing to the road. The only affiliate of FIA in this country is AAP, the national auto club formerly known as the Philippine Motor Association.

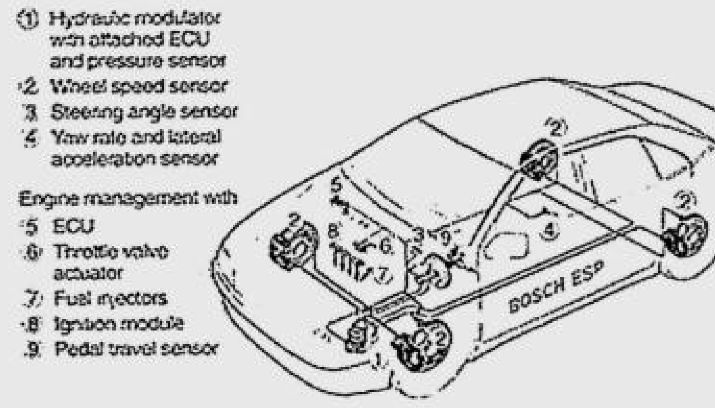
Incentives

Speaking at the European Union "eSafety" forum in Brussels last month, FIA president Mosley asked, "If consumers can have tax breaks for cleaner cars, why not safer cars, too?" Mosley was referring to EU governments' reduced VAT rates for catalyst systems, lower fuel duties for sulfur-free fuels and discounted registration taxes for Euro IV models—fiscal incentives that promote green technologies and offer environmental improvement at a lower price.

Mosley pointed out that the absence of tax breaks for safety-related products unnecessarily delays the introduction of systems that can save lives on roads today. Stressing that safety should be viewed as another aspect of a healthy and sustainable environment, he cited Electronic Stability Control (ESC) as an effective eSafety technology. ESC systems compensate driver error by automatically moderating a vehicle's lateral stability through use of ABS and traction control technologies, thus helping prevent lateral slides.

Mosley said that ESC, in particular, tends to reduce the likelihood of side-impact crashes into oncoming vehicles. According to a US National Highway Safety Administration study published last September, ESC reduced single vehicle crashes in passenger cars by 35 percent compared to the same models sold in prior years without it. ESC proved even more effective for sport utility vehicles, which have inherent stability problems, as it reduced single vehicle crashes involving SUVs by 67 percent.

Electronic Stability Program ESP from Bosch



High-end

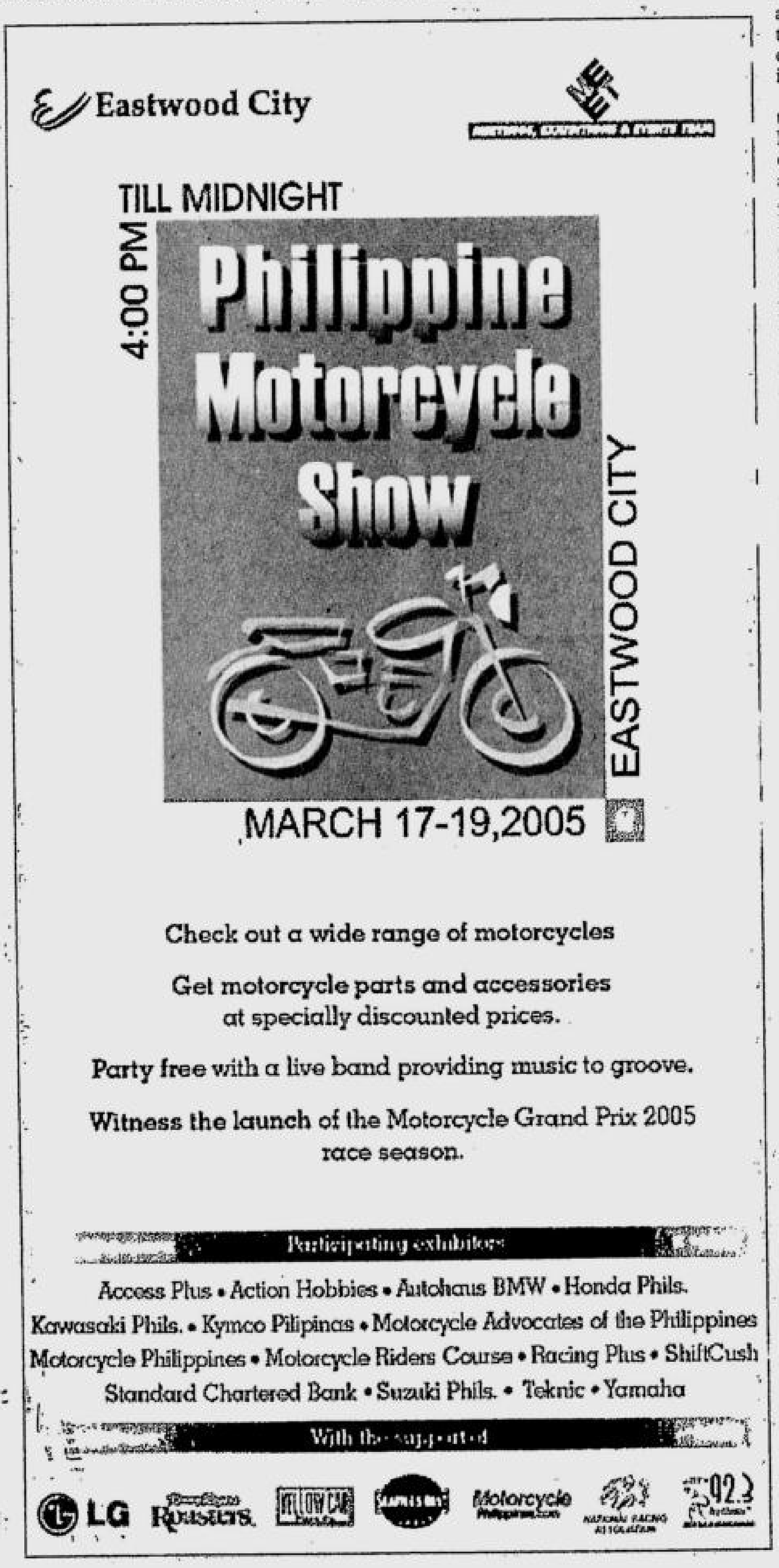
Unfortunately, ESC is standard equipment in high-end cars only (Dynamic Stability Control in BMWs and Volvos and Electronic Stability Program in Mercedes-Benzes.) The introduction of ESC into the vehicle fleet is quite slow, Mosley observed. In 2003, for example, only 7.4 percent of passenger vehicles in the United States had ESC. In the same year, 15,621 people died in single vehicle crashes in the US. If all the cars involved had been equipped with ESC, he contended, "that horrific death toll could have been cut by at least 30 percent."

Research conducted by the Swedish National Road Administration based on real accident data in 2000-2002 indicated that on dry roads, the best estimate of ESC effectiveness was 22.1 percent and 31.8 percent for wet. As a result of this research, the National Roads Authority now advises consumers to buy cars with ESC installed. Corollary to this, Mosley urged the European Commission to develop a fiscal incentive scheme for eSafety technologies such as ESC, using the same legal and reporting requirements presented in a proposed tax break package for cars that will meet the Euro V emission control standards.

Proven

Such incentives, Mosley said, should only be offered to technologies with proven ef-

TAX/ B2-3



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Applause for Honda and Mitsubishi

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

HERE'S a glass to Honda for winning the major honors in the inaugural Car of the Year Awards. This comes on the heels of a similar award given to Honda in Japan last year wherein Accord's counterpart in Tokyo was also similarly voted Car of the Year.

Seemingly, Honda is on a roll.

Honda, together with Mitsubishi, ranked the highest in sales satisfaction in the Philippines the past year.

Oh, well, Mitsubishi, too? Yes, because last year, Mitsubishi swept all the major awards in the tough Dakar Safari Rally and, just recently, it also won top honors in the commercial sales category in the country.

* * *

A study by J.D. Power Asia Pacific said Honda and Mitsubishi were tied for first in the new-vehicle sales and delivery in the Philippines based on the Philippines' Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI).

The Philippines SSI Study, now in its fourth year, was based on evaluations from more than 1,200 new-vehicle buyers who were surveyed at two to six months of ownership.

The study identified six factors that contributed to overall customer satisfaction with the sales experience. In order of importance, they are salesperson, paperwork, delivery process, delivery timing, deal and dealer facility.

* * *

Honda and Mitsubishi had tied for first, each recording an SSI score of 844 points out of a maximum of 1,000.

Honda led the industry in three out of the six factors: dealer facility, deal and delivery process. With an 8-point improvement over 2003, Honda leaped from fifth to first place.

Mitsubishi registered a three-point, year-over-year increase and jumped from fourth to a tie for first in 2003. Mitsubishi also led the industry on three factors: dealer facility, salesperson and delivery timing.

* * *

The study said the Philippines' new-vehicle buyers were sensitive to delivery time. Customers who did not receive their vehicle at the promised time record SSI scored an average 91 points below the industry average, while customers compelled to accept an inconvenient delivery time post SSI scored 51 points below the industry average.

"Although, on average, the amount of time it takes to deliver new vehicles has improved, customer expectations of delivery time have also risen," said Gerrit Kuyntjes, general manager at J.D. Power Asia Pacific. "The number of customers reporting better than expected delivery time has fallen 6 percentage points—from 38 percent in 2003 to 32 percent in 2004."

Concluded Kuyntjes: "Both Honda and Mitsubishi perform well in managing customer expectation of delivery time, as the percentage of their customers reporting better than expected delivery time is higher than the industry average."

* * *

The study is an eye-opener in that dealers, if not the car companies themselves, should be sensitive to customer feelings and needs at all times.

The study found that higher implementation of service standards at the time of delivery—activities that are performed by the dealership either during or after the service event—had yielded higher SSI scores.

The implementation rate of these service standards has improved since the 2003 levels. Delivering a new vehicle with both the exterior and interior clean and undamaged is now being implemented by almost all makes.

* * *

It was also found that other sales activities that have a positive impact on sales satisfaction include promptness in greeting customers, offering a test drive and providing a pressure-free and problem-free purchase experience.

The study also revealed that customers who reported higher satisfaction with the sales and delivery process of buying a new vehicle are more inclined to repurchase and recommend the same make.

Among the most satisfied customers—those recording SSI scores above 930 points (almost one-half 49 percent)—indicated that they would definitely repurchase the same make. In contrast, only 26 percent of the least satisfied customers—those recording SSI scores below 770 points—would repurchase the same make.

* * *

FAST FACTS ON NLEX: The improvement of the 84-km Northern Luzon Expressway from Balintawak, Quezon City, to Sta. Ines, Mabalacat, Pampanga, cost Manila North Tollways Corp. P20 billion to complete. MNTC should be commended for its guts to spend that much in these difficult, really trying times when the peso's power is that puny against the dollar. So, instead of bickering over the new toll at NLEX, why don't we instead think that by paying the fees without raising any fuss, we are, in effect, contributing something to the risk-filled, gargantuan effort of MNTC to bring quality to our lives?

* * *

QUOTE ME. He who doesn't like a thing has a thousand and one reasons to justify his position.

Erratum: IN THE PICTORIAL of the First Car of the Year Awards rites, the name of Nissan Motor Philippines Inc.'s manager for sales inadvertently appeared as Celery Camacho. It should have read Ellery Matthew Camacho. We regret the error. —*Ed.*

Tax breaks for safer cars

From page B2-2

fectiveness and at a level equivalent to the real product cost which is estimated at 200 to 300 Euros per unit. By offering a tax break, EU member-states would dramatically increase public awareness of ESC and its safety benefits. "Inevitably, this would accelerate demand for the system's use and encourage industry to make it a standard feature across all model ranges, including light transporters, trucks and buses, as soon as possible," he said.

Readers may wonder what an idea proposed in far-away Europe has to do with us since less than one percent of our population can afford to buy cars equipped with ESC. Well, there was a time when cars sold here did not have seatbelts. Now seatbelts are standard equipment and there is a law mandating their usage. Filipinos are getting to be more safety-conscious and now look for airbags and ABS when they shop for a new car. It takes years for safety equipment readily available abroad to be offered in a Third World country like ours at a reasonable price, but public awareness and demand can speed things up. Applied to the Philippine context, Mosley's idea is viable. If our Department of Trade, in pursuit of energy conservation, can grant tax breaks for fuel-efficient cars with engine displacements of 1.1 liter or less, why not extend the same incentive package for safer cars and in the process save lives?

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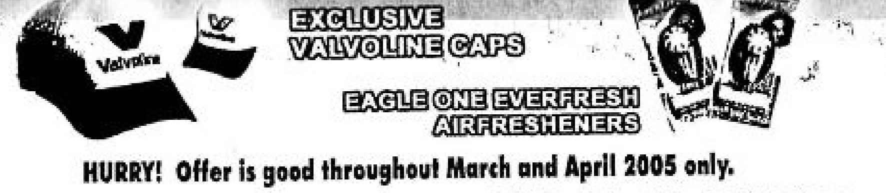

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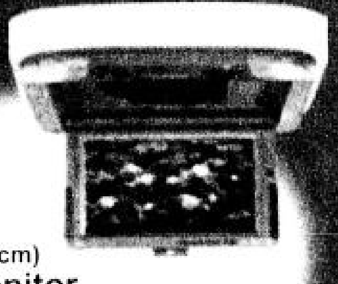

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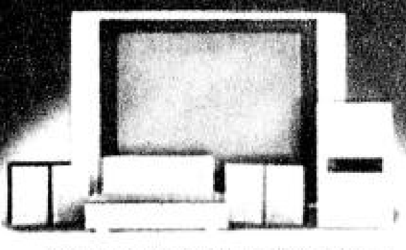

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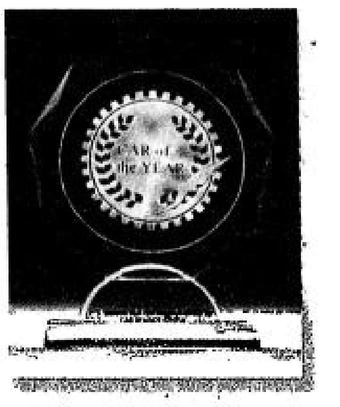

THE BEST VAN OF THE YEAR

The Hyundai Starex is definitely on a roll this 2005 and shines even brighter! From grabbing the No.1 spot in sales in the Van category, according to the CAMPI Reports 2004, the Hyundai Starex recently earned the title as the Best Van or People Carrier of the Year award by the Car Award Group (CAG) as well.

HARI Managing Director, Ms. Fe Agudo (center) receives the Best Van - People Carrier Award from Car Award Group

From over 56 cars tested, the Car Award Group, a collaboration of motoring and motor-related journalists from local media institutions such as newspapers or broadsheets, magazines, radio, television and alternative industries, chose a total of 10 finalists that excel in their respective categories, which included the Hyundai Starex.

In a span of 6 weekends in October and November of last year, at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Cavite, the judges tested each car in terms of performance, comfort, safety, design and overall value for money. The contenders in the Van or People Carrier category basically share the same body configuration with two doors in front, a large sliding door on one or both sides of the vehicle and a large cargo door at the rear. They should be able to seat seven (7) to fifteen (15) passengers and can be propelled by gasoline or diesel engines. When the results came in, the Hyundai Starex won the Best Van or People Carrier of the Year with flying colors with its expansive cargo room, high and airy passenger space, plus its luxury features for passengers.

The Hyundai's CRDi diesel engine also scored big with the judges with its high performance and fuel efficiency. The Common Rail Direct Injection or CRDi diesel engine is Hyundai's breakthrough engine that minimizes maintenance, maximizes power output while maintaining high torque. The CRDi diesel engine accelerates with as much as 145ps, but at the same time achieves optimum engine quietness without the engine clatter common in diesel engines. And now, due to the rising gasoline prices, diesel engines are sought to be the solution to contemporary motoring.

The 6-weekend automotive test was sponsored by the AAP or Automobile Association of the Philippines. Top-notched rally drivers such as Denise Santos, Raul Asuncion, and Joey Lanuza marshalled the event. More than 40 members from CAG tested each vehicle based on their impressions while driving using a standard test sheet. And the results was tallied and audited by Sycip, Gorres and Velayo (SGV and Co.).

This award is even more monumental for Hyundai because this is the 1st ever Car of the Year (COTY) Awards for the Philippines. The ceremonies were held last February 24 at the Rockwell Tent in Makati City.

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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**
Chief of Correspondents **Pam Pastor**

2bU!'s to-do list before and after graduation

By Nino Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

GRADUATION is just a breeze away and amid all the marching practices, every student should realize that there's more to graduation than grandiose gifts and flaunt-worthy grad pics to give away. Here is a checklist of things to accomplish before you don that toga and march to the tune of the graduation song, and suggestions on what to do right after that momentous time in your scholastic life.

ILLUSTRATIONS: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Before graduation

- Complete a directory and don't limit it to your close friends and classmates. Make sure you include everybody in school since you don't know who you'll want to connect with in the future. Aside from contact numbers, the directory should also include other info like fave stuff and birthdays. New ones in the future may even blossom, who knows.
- If your batch is into technology (who isn't these days?), create an account on Friendster or Yahoo Groups. Apart from staying in touch with just a few mouse clicks, everyone can be updated through posts and pictures.
- Make sure that all your records in school are clean by now. If you still have some projects to pass or obligations to fulfill, do it as soon as possible or you might just end up harassed on graduation day, if you get to graduate on time, that is. Make sure that if ever you owe anybody in school anything, fulfill your commitments before the school year ends. Doing so closes this chapter of your life so you can move on to a fresh start.
- Say thanks to everyone who made this year fun and fulfilling. Apart from the usual suspects (friends and teachers), don't forget to express gratitude to people who just made your day or helped you in any way while you were studying. That may include the security guard who let you even when you didn't have an ID, the janitress who made sure nobody entered the comfort room while you were washing your stained skirt, the canteen vendor who gave you a little more serving of food compared to what others were getting, the club president who encouraged you or even that stranger with whom you had a small conversation during vacant time, the one who you never had the chance to talk with again. They made your day once or even more than that. Now it's time for you to make their day.

Most likely to succeed
Cutest couple:

- Get back what is yours. Hunt those who owe you money and make sure they pay you completely before you part ways. Settle or you may never get the chance to claim what is yours again. Clean your lockers or your council desk and take home or give away your office supplies and knickknacks. Get the books, bags, clothes, CDs and everything else that your friends, teachers and classmates borrowed from you. Christmas is still months away and you are not Santa. Prove to yourself and to others that they just can't take stuff from you and never return them again.
- Do mushy stuff reserved for your "*barkada*." Take more pictures than usual, whip out those autograph books, create more memories together. Share more secrets. Confess. Spend a farewell party at your favorite hangout. Make memories that you can look back, cry and laugh at come reunions.
- Figure out what you want to do next. Graduation is not an excuse for any student to be direction-less.

If you're graduating from high school, know where and what you want to study and apply now. If you're graduating from college, I hope you've already printed out your resume. Go ahead and take that well-deserved break, but remember that time is more precious than the ring that Gollum desires.

After graduation

- Lighten your life by finally saying goodbye to all those books and school stuff that you'll never use again. Donate textbooks and materials to lower batches or if you're feeling like Mother Teresa, gather all of the used but still usable books, supplies and uniform of your batch and donate them to public schools.
- Scan diskettes and delete files you will never need again.
- Make a scrapbook of school memories. Gather all those snapshots, tickets, receipts, newsletters, exams with perfect scores and whatnot, and go mad with creativity. Create that masterpiece which you can flaunt during get-togethers.
- Celebrate. Indulge in a massage, have a haircut or a facial, buy an expensive bottle of hair conditioner or yummy-smelling lotion. Eat out, watch a movie and attend a concert. Spend time with family. Cuddle with your significant other. Play with your pet.
- Now that you have a little more time on your hands, do whatever it is that you have always wanted to do but couldn't because of too little time and too many school activities. Take up summer classes, organize your wardrobe, cover your books with plastic, burn all those CDs or go to Singapore. Be afraid of the great possibility that time can never be as kind again.
- Get together with batch mates. Schedule it right after graduation or a year after. Have fun with these people you have spent at least a year with and treasure every second with them, especially now that you're all facing new chapters that will probably take a lot of your time.
- Go back to school or go to work, of course.

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what to wear on graduation day

Text by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Ocs Alvarez

GRADUATING this semester? Then you've surely called all your relatives, finished your thesis, had everyone from the janitor to the librarian sign your clearance, and done everything deemed illegal by school authorities (like swiping school property as a "remembrance," or going to off-limits areas in school). And you've seen your toga, probably the most hard-earned garment you'll ever wear in your life.

But what about the dress under the toga? Getting just any old dress because it won't be seen during the ceremony is no excuse. You'll have to worry about comfort, for one thing. And length. And what it would look like when you take out the toga to attend a graduation party or dinner.

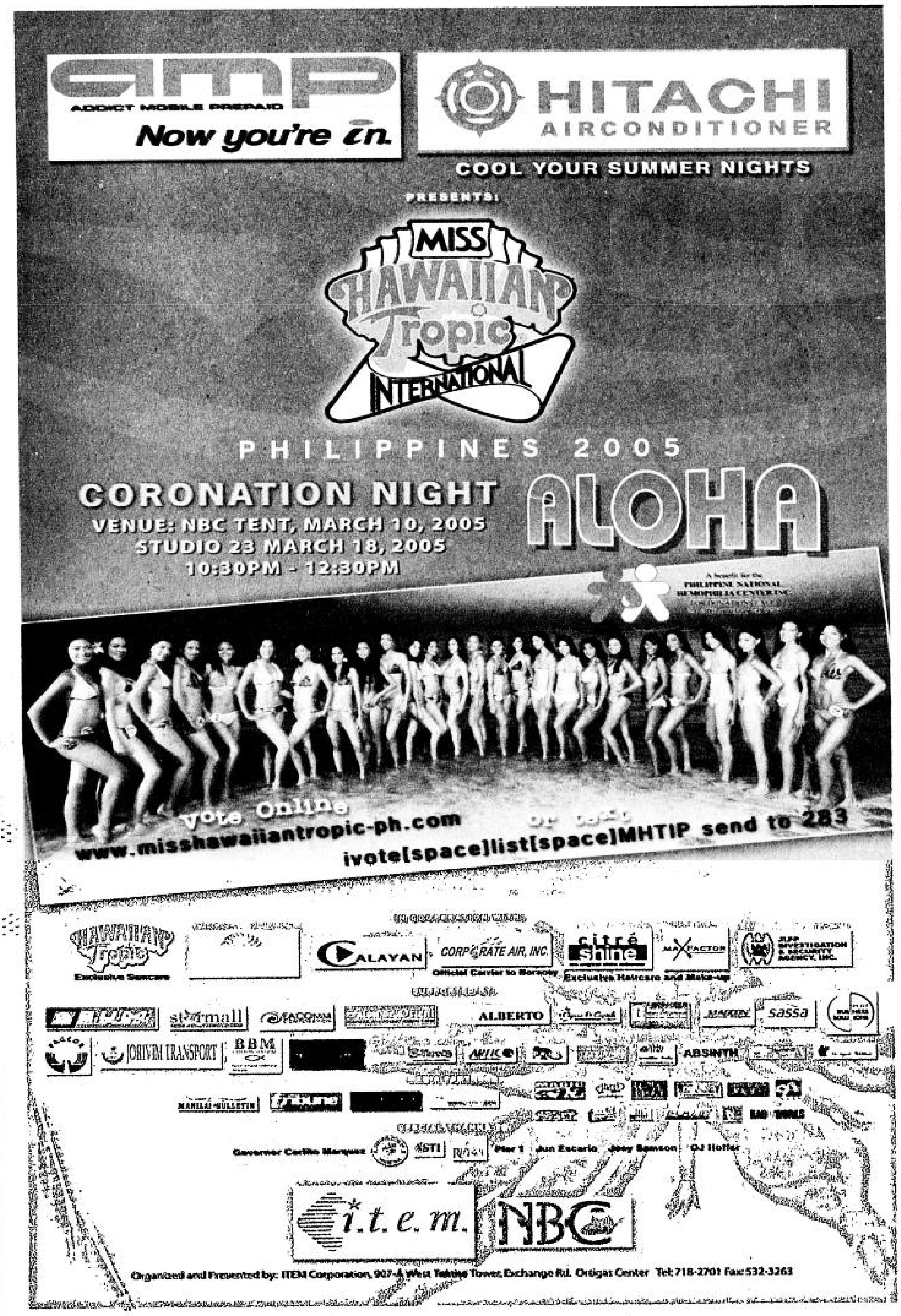
We've selected a few dresses you might want to wear under your toga on that special day. If your school requires a certain type of dress (white, long-sleeved, modest, etc.) for the ceremony, try to look for something that is either wearable after graduation, or something inexpensive and disposable.

It isn't practical to get an expensive, frumpy dress that you wouldn't touch after graduation. But if you're lucky enough to be allowed to wear anything you choose underneath the toga, so long as it isn't seen, then go for knee-length, semi-formal dresses you can wear to other occasions as well. Use simple, elegant accessories to make you look good and feel great on that special day.

Don't forget to spray on light cologne (nothing heavy for a full auditorium!) and apply shine-free makeup for those picture-perfect moments.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

RED satin dress, P1,595



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Learn from the ma

Here are tips
who have ma
almost an art

By Marla Miniano
2bU! Correspondent

FOR UNDERGRADUATES, the next couple of weeks will be hell, with all the final exams, term papers, and group presentations.

To help them better manage their work, we asked our readers to share their cramming tips. Here are their—we assume—tried-and-tested techniques for coping with deadlines.

A bag of popcorn, a piece of chocolate and total silence, as I highlight (lines in) my book with an orange marker.—**Romel, 19, Management Engineering, Ateneo de Manila University (AdMU)**

Minutes before the exam, I scan through my book/handouts/notes and read all the important points and details out loud. For some reason, it helps. I can remember things better.—**Monicca, 20, Interdisciplinary Studies, AdMU**

I scan the headings, and I read only texts that are in bold or italic font.—**Ladypooh, 19, Nursing, Trinity College**

Look for key terms. Make acronyms for easy memorization.—**Mickey, 20, Political Science, De la Salle University (DLSU)**

All you need is a pack of Extra Joss, a pack of cigarettes, and some good music to write that 40-page paper in 12 hours.—**Monix, 18, Creative Writing, AdMU**

I wake up an hour before going to school to read the summary in my textbook. Sometimes, I just read the terms at the end of the chapter. I also use acronyms and pay special attention to the highlighted parts. I review my lessons one day before or on the day of the exam itself so the info will really be retained. For papers, I don't make drafts anymore. Computer *na agad para diretso* print. For research, I usually look for stuff on the Net that I can easily download.—**Chrissy, 19, Advertising, Assumption College**

Relax, have presence of mind, and be optimistic!—**Cox, 18, Psychology, AdMU**

My tried-and-tested cramming technique is sleeping after school until dinner, then drinking an unlimited amount of soda while studying till the wee hours of the morning (also includes highlighting parts of my book and notes like crazy!) Then, sleeping for an hour again, before taking a cold shower.—**Deanna, 19, Interdisciplinary Studies, AdMU**

Let your classmates do all the article outlines, then photocopy before class.—**Jet, 18, Political Science, DLSU**

I study the night before the exam—one hour per subject. On the day itself, I scan my notes early in the morning to refresh my n
get enough sleep so tha
exam and answer the q
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so I can edit it. For exam
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plinary Studies, AdMU

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(*Naks*, how profound
Management, DLSU

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cramming.—**Nana, 19,**

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my work.—**Chi, 21, C**
AdMU

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ment Engineering, AdM

I can't concentrate o
my bed. I drown myself
much caffeine, plus th
study enough, is a
tion.—**Marley, 19, Inter**

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The room has to be co
light from my desk l
cus.—**Mitch, 19, Politic**

Stay up all night and
mize your time, like re
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can in any available co
or at least those that a
class where you have
Cram with grace.. *Nap*
Seminarian, 20

Of course, procrastin
gestions above, it is still
get a headstart on those

E-mail the author at

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ng dress, P1,895,

AQUA dress with flower brooch, P1,295, Karimadon

DRAPED pink dress, P995, Freeway

, Karimadon

PINK tweed tube dress, P1,700, Ensembles

TAN and gold lace dress, P1,595, Karimadon

BLACK dress with pink trimming, P1,250, Karimadon

sters

from people
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iemory. I also make sure that I
I can concentrate during the
estions properly.—Clara, 13,

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by keeping in mind that the
nd learning should coincide.
)—Junman, 20, Business

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olitical Science, AdMU
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disciplinary Studies, AdMU
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l Science, DLSU

do nothing but cram. Maxi-
ding while in motion (com-
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nputer. Cut irrelevant classes,
irrelevant in relation to the
deadline. Cram with style.
pagdadala lang 'yan.—The

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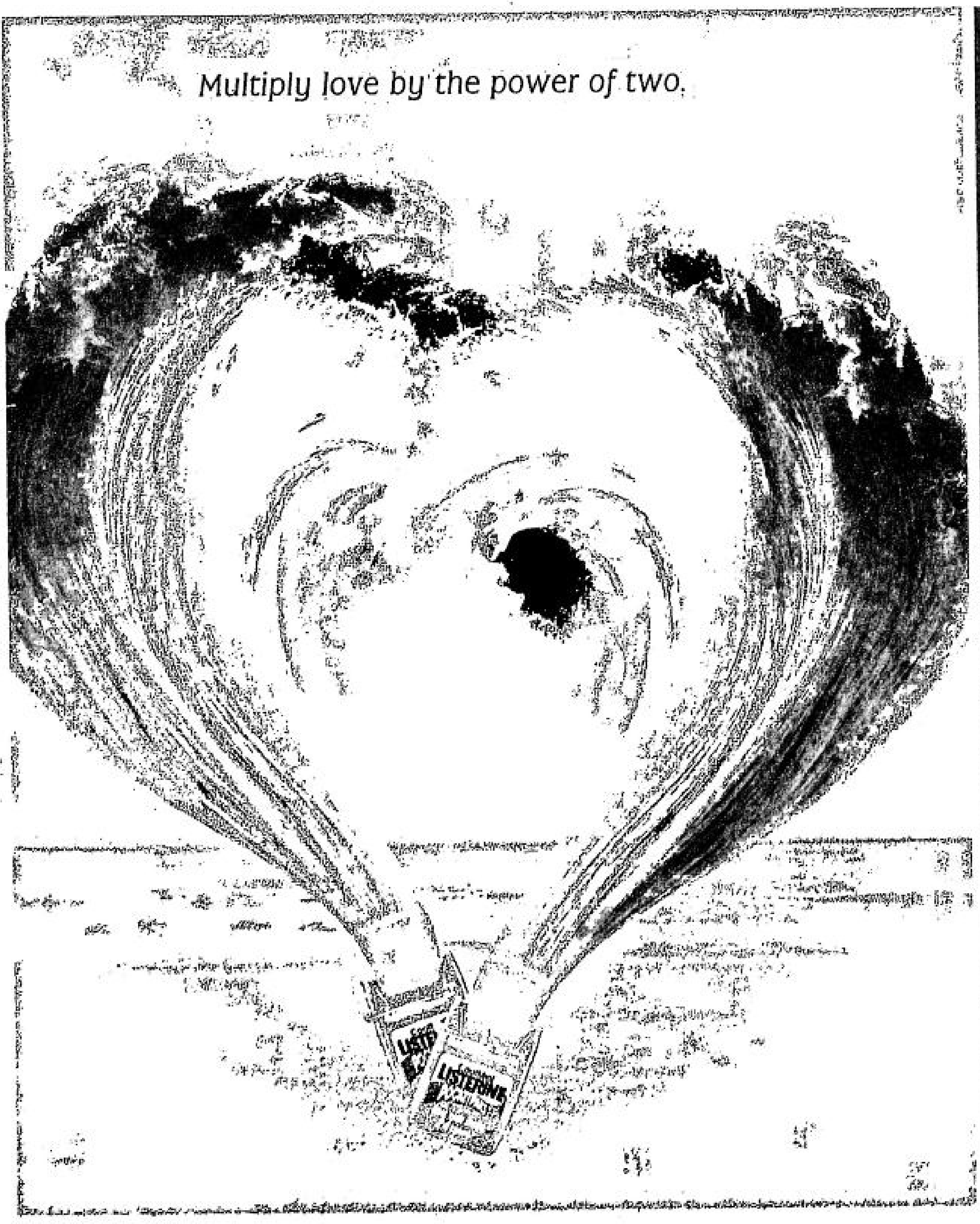
ghly recommended that you
readings and papers. Now.

uyacaramella@yahoo.com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UHM, none.—Anne Katrine, 16, graduated from Bloomfield Academy and is planning to take up Education in PNU

BEING independent. And I have learned to be myself. No pretensions.—Paolo Pilapil, 25, graduated from UPHR in 2002

THE VALUE of friendship and the joys of living independently. —Pauline, 22, graduated from UPLB in 2003

2BU! SURVEY

What's the best thing you learned in college?

Text and photos by
Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

IF someone advises you not to drop a course because it would make you a quitter, don't mind him. A 5 mark on the transcript of records would do more harm. And mean people do exist. They are also known as math professors.—Aly Piamonte, graduated from UPLB in 2000

I LEARNED how to party hard and work harder. It showed me that there are different kinds of people in this freaking planet. That you are lucky if you find a true friend. It made me experience the happiest, the loneliest, the most exciting and intoxicating situations life had to offer. That life can be tricky but we are trickier.—Jamie, 22, graduated from CSB

HOW to be independent.—Hannah Calma, 24, graduated from NEU in 2000

THAT college is one of the best things that can happen to your life.—Honey, 22, graduated from Batangas State University in 2003

WE ALL know school is a place for learning. For most of us, it is where we learned about multiplying fractions, constructing grammatically correct sentences and various species of living things.

School is also where we learned about life and the real world: how to deal with difficult people, how to budget money, how to kiss ass or stand up for what we believe in.

Below is a bunch of wise guys who have, thankfully, learned something in school. Apart from the ABC and 1-2-3, that is.

"It takes more than books and brains to survive college and face the challenges of the real world.—"Carlo Lamason, 24, graduated from the University of Santo Tomas (UST) in 2001

"You need to have the right friends to survive." —Ria, 23, graduated from the University of Perpetual Help Rizal in 2001

"You don't need to be the top student to prove later on that you learned something." —Jasmine, 20, graduated from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in 2004

"Faith and diligence are the two most important factors in attaining success in life." —Meryll, 21, graduated from UPLB in 2004

"Mediocrity is a fate worse than death!"—Aisa, 21, graduated from UST in 2004

"Achievements are no assurance you will get your dream job."—Rose, 26, graduated from UPHR in 1999

"College life opens your eyes to the real world." —Aneth, 23, graduated from Adamson University in 2003

"The importance of sleep."—Judith Lacanilao, 29, graduated from Polytechnic University of the Philippines Sta. Mesa in 1997

"The importance of the Xerox machine."—Herbie Casimiro, 30, graduated from De la Salle University Dasmariñas in 1996

"I've learned the pros and cons of being 'affiliated' with my instructor."—Krsna, 23, graduated from St. Paul College in 2002

"The importance of financial and time management."—Mariecar L. Manalo, 28, graduated from UP Diliman in 2000

"I have learned to become self-reliant especially when exams and deadlines are coming. Also, membership in various organizations has taught me to value the opinion of others and enhance my leadership skills."—Jana Vicente, 25, graduated from UP Manila in 2001

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

2BU!'S RAVES AND RANTS

Buzz on Neil Gaiman

By Maui V. Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

The stuff we can't seem to stop talking about in the office

RAVES

Rumors of **Neil Gaiman** visiting the Philippines (check out his online journal's archives) has got us buzzing about our fave Gaiman novel. Quick—what's your favorite Sandman book?

On the lighter side, we're in love with **Penshoppe's Eye Glimmer** stick in **Cosmic**. It's got that hint of peachy-gold-pink, which is perfect for summer.

Rants

Why oh why can't a **certain bank in The Podium fix its ATM?** It's been dead for four days, and for being the only bank branch at the mall, we'd expected more.

And bus drivers in the metro really ought to take a refresher course on driving school.

We're also soooo over musicians who can't seem to shed off their diva attitude. Remember kids, what goes up, must come down.

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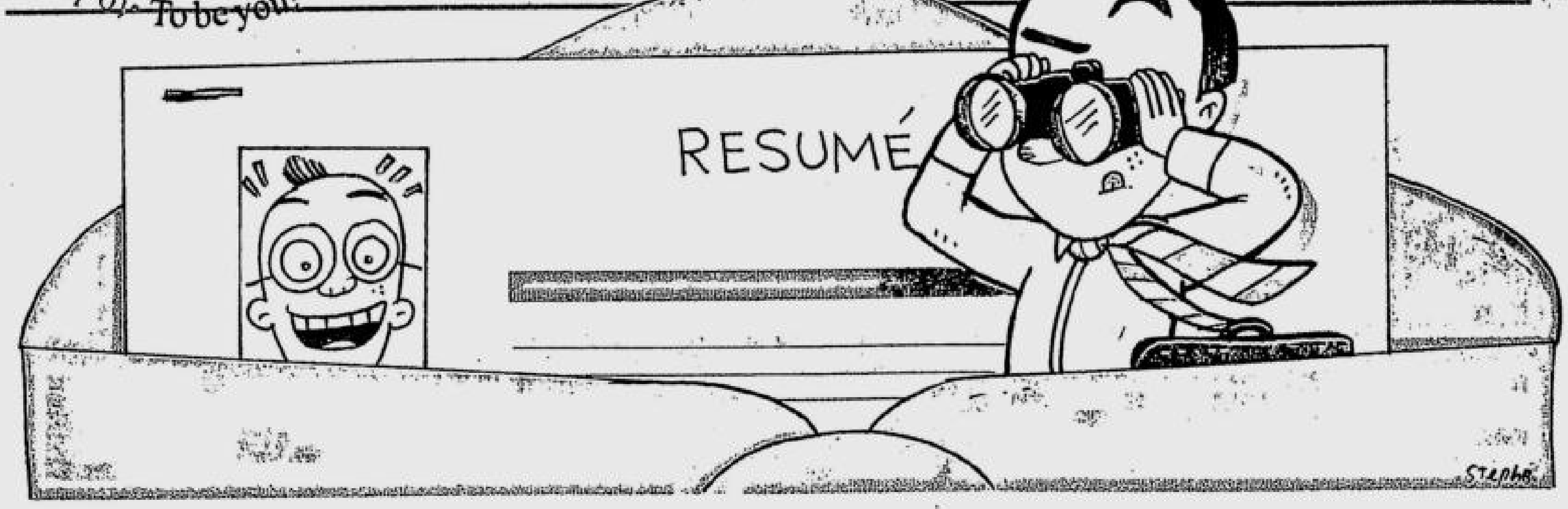

Think of your unsuccessful interviews and failed exams as practice runs for the ones that will land you that dream job

Guide to job hunting

By Hans Lerwyn R. Villarica
2bU! Contributor

THOUSANDS of articles have claimed to truly help a person in his or her job search. These words of wisdom assert their views on how to make the most attractive resume, how to behave in interviews, and even how one should handle the likely rejection.

As much as these guides help, they all deal with what is relative and therefore are never truly that helpful. Human resource gurus have yet to define the perfect resume and neither has it ever been authoritatively written about in any text. How one should conduct himself is largely dependent on how the interviewer conducts his interview, so speculating on that is as precise as any other form of fortune-telling, if not less so.

Indeed, there are only a handful of absolutes concerning job hunting and it would be wise for you, the job hunter, to focus on these, if not for the sake of landing a job, then for the sake of staying sane until then.

Thou shall wait

Job applications are unlike the school applications you encountered in the past. Each has its own timeframe since companies have different screening processes and have varying hiring needs. While one company may ask you to undergo two tests and three interviews, another one may simply screen you through one interview. While some companies may actually have vacant positions that

GUIDE/ D2

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Pilgrimage Date: March 24, 2005
6:00 AM (Depart for Laguna via Rizal Province)
5:30 PM (Depart for Manila via South Luzon Expressway)

Tour Rate: PhP 1400.00 per person *(Group discount available)*

Tour Inclusions:
Morning Snack
Buffet Lunch at EXOTIK GARDEN RESTAURANT
Afternoon Snack
Guided Tour
Souvenir Items

This Holy Week, do your annual church pilgrimage of seven churches or VISITA IGLESIA along the Eastern Laguna towns, known as the "Baybayin". Visit century old churches. Step into the past and reflect on your future.

Experience the beauty of the towns of Mabitac, Sta. Maria, Siniloan, Panguil, Pakil, Paete, Kalayaan and Lumban: its people and its culture that is deeply interwoven with their faith, the protection of Sierra Madre mountain ranges and generosity of Laguna de Bay.

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Guide to job hunting

From page D1

need to be filled as soon as possible, other companies continuously screen without any assurance that their need for new employees is in any way urgent. The only thing constant is that you will have to wait—for their call, for their decision, maybe even for nothing.

It would be best for your nerves and continuous development if you engage in some fruitful endeavors in the meantime. This time need not be a waste or a boring in-between period. With this in mind, don't hesitate to pursue activities that you have been meaning to do for some time now, which will further develop skills related to your prospective job, will help those around you who are in need, and/or will result in some fun.

For instance, if you are a photography enthusiast who wants to work in an advertising agency, you may find it helpful to enroll in workshops in digital imaging or advanced lighting techniques. If you were a busybody in college, you may finally have enough free time to travel with friends to foreign places that you have been longing to visit.

But don't limit yourself to purely selfish pursuits. Take this time to do volunteer work and help some people in need, may they be friends or strangers.

Once you get accepted into a time-consuming job, it may be a couple of years before the opportunity to do any of the aforementioned presents itself again. Help yourself and others now.

NA!
GUARD?..
StephB.

Thou shall do lots of chores

As much as this time should be spent partaking in activities that you want to do, it is also a time spent doing what you have to do. Case in point: chores.

To your parents and to the rest of the world, you are doing nothing. Even if you are able to fill your schedule with some arguably fruitful engagements, everyone will still assume you are doing nothing simply because you are unemployed. As a result, you will have to do some chores on an irritatingly frequent basis. What at first would seem like adhering to a few simple requests will eventually turn into a routine comprised of dropping off and fetching your younger sibling, shopping for groceries, paying for various utilities, assisting in other people's work, and reorganizing the messy rooms in your house.

Throughout this painful time, you should never ever argue with those who are asking for these pesky favors: your parents. Instead, you should always follow, blindly if need be. Saying no or even hesitating is an act of suicide that will force you to admit that you are a sorry and ungrateful loser who is mooching off them during this extremely monetarily scarce period and is not even willing to do some measly errands in return. Worse, the obvious will be slapped on your face: "You are jobless!" Knowing it is one thing but hearing it as an insult is something that will truly scar you for life.

It is worth noting that another option is to just fly under the radar so that they never get the opportunity to actually tell you what to do; however, this approach usually just results in the chores accumulating and not in their disappearing. So, just obey your parents.

Thou shall doubt oneself

During this time of uncertainty, you will be especially vulnerable to some judgment. This is inevitable and only natural since you have been exposing yourself and asking not just the companies but also yourself if you are good enough. Your peers will also contribute to this self-induced pity party as some will dump on you for pursuing what in their opinion is a lowly job while others will flaunt their own success at having already secured a high-paying job.

Just as Descartes' doubting proved to be pointless, so will your own sad version. Aside from distracting you from the goal at hand, self-doubt will prevent you from ever reaching it. If not kept in check, your low expectation and view of yourself will become a self-fulfilling prophecy as you go through interviews and answer tests. No one wants to hire anyone with no self-confidence, a low self-image, and a gloomy vibe about him.

In order to keep your eye on the so-called ball, stay optimistic. Think of your unsuccessful interviews and failed exams as practice runs for the ones that will land you that dream job. Don't allow yourself to indulge in insecurities; rather, as previously suggested, stay active during this time. Even better, continue your job search in spite of the setbacks. After all, the more companies you apply to, the more calls you will receive from potential companies interested in hiring you, and the better you will feel and be.

If you are still feeling low from some people's nasty comments, then spend time with your friends who adore you to boost your spirits. Loosen up and engage in a little harmless schadenfreude. Doing so will make you realize that, like those wretched voices in your head, the negative feedback you have been getting from your peers are meaningless and are best left ignored.

Thou shall make a big decision

At some point, you will come to a crossroads where you will either continue with your job search or call it off. In other words, you will get a job offer. In considering whether you should accept or reject it, you should consider the obvious—compensation, job fit, career progression—only as it relates to your true decision factors: whether you can perform in this prospective job for an extended period of time, or you think a better offer is on the horizon.

In evaluating these decision factors, be objective. In answering the former, review your past experiences in maintaining your interest and good performance in similar tasks, may it be in your school projects or in some extra-curricular activities. In contemplating the latter, in case you have another pending application, assess how far along you are in the screening process and how likely you will receive an offer. If you are merely gearing up for your first interview, then the risk of not getting the job is higher compared to if you have already passed several screening steps. Be aware of your true chances and how comfortable you are with the risks involved.

In the end, making that final decision is all a matter of gut feel. If you feel hesitant, then it may not be the job for you. If you are confident you can get something better, then wait for it. If you are happy with the offer, then congratulate yourself on a job hunt well done.

Ateneo debaters excel

THE ATENEO de Manila University, composed of Ateneo Debate Society (ADS) president Eleanor Uy and political science student Jess Lopez, reached the semi-finals of the 25th World Universities Debating Championship, hosted by Multimedia University in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from Dec. 27 to Jan. 3.

They were the lone Asian team standing in the semi-final leg of the tournament, rising above 304 other teams.

It was the largest debate tournament ever held in the world. The tournament was held at the famous landmark, Menara Kuala Lumpur Tower.

Ateneo debated against Cambridge A, Oxford B and Oxford D on the motion that "this house would use gambling as a means to rejuvenate depressed economic zones." The Ateneo teams were supported by the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company.

After nine grueling preliminary rounds, Ateneo was ranked 17th in the tournament, knocking Oxford A out of the break in a crucial Round 9 match-up.

Ateneo, along with Cambridge A, the top-seeded team, knocked out Galway A and University of Cork Literary and Historical Society A in the octofinal leg on the motion that "this house believes that it is time for an Asean parliament."

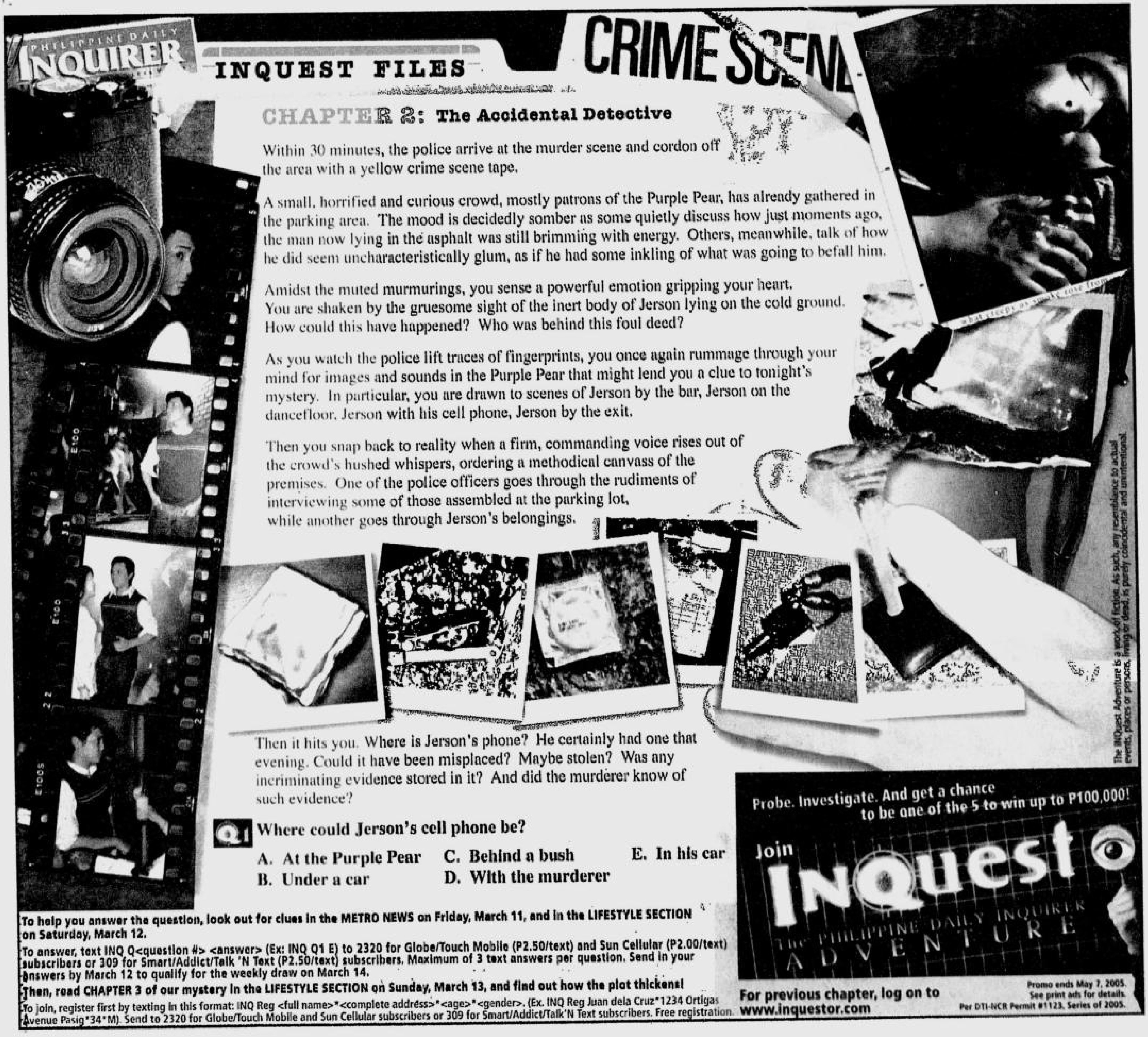
Ateneo and Cambridge A also scored a significant victory in the quarterfinal round on the motion, "this house believes that mentally handicapped people are better cared for in the community than in institutions," against Auckland A and Cambridge B.

In the English as a Second Language category, the Ateneo C team, composed of communication student Glenn Tuazon and political science student Sharmila Parmanand, progressed to the semifinals.

Lopez ranked 19th among the speakers, while Uy ranked 27th. There were a total of 624 speakers. Lopez was the highest-ranked among the Asians.

Earlier, the Ateneo Debate Society won the Asian Championships for the third consecutive time, reached the final series of the World Championships and the Final Four of the Australasian Championships.

The ADS will be returning to the international debate scene in May to defend its Asian title in the University of Malaya in Malaysia.



INQUEST FILES

CHAPTER 2: The Accidental Detective

Within 30 minutes, the police arrive at the murder scene and cordon off the area with a yellow crime scene tape.

A small, horrified and curious crowd, mostly patrons of the Purple Pear, has already gathered in the parking area. The mood is decidedly somber as some quietly discuss how just moments ago, the man now lying in the asphalt was still brimming with energy. Others, meanwhile, talk of how he did seem uncharacteristically glum, as if he had some inkling of what was going to befall him.

Amidst the muted murmurings, you sense a powerful emotion gripping your heart. You are shaken by the gruesome sight of the inert body of Jerson lying on the cold ground. How could this have happened? Who was behind this foul deed?

As you watch the police lift traces of fingerprints, you once again rummage through your mind for images and sounds in the Purple Pear that might lend you a clue to tonight's mystery. In particular, you are drawn to scenes of Jerson by the bar, Jerson on the dancefloor, Jerson with his cell phone, Jerson by the exit.

Then you snap back to reality when a firm, commanding voice rises out of the crowd's hushed whispers, ordering a methodical canvass of the premises. One of the police officers goes through the rudiments of interviewing some of those assembled at the parking lot, while another goes through Jerson's belongings.

Then it hits you. Where is Jerson's phone? He certainly had one that evening. Could it have been misplaced? Maybe stolen? Was any incriminating evidence stored in it? And did the murderer know of such evidence?

Q1 Where could Jerson's cell phone be?

A. At the Purple Pear
B. Under a car
C. Behind a bush
D. With the murderer
E. In his car

To help you answer the question, look out for clues in the METRO NEWS on Friday, March 11, and in the LIFESTYLE SECTION on Saturday, March 12.

To answer, text INQ Q<question #> <answer> (Ex: INQ Q1 E) to 2320 for Globe/Touch Mobile (P2.50/text) and Sun Cellular (P2.00/text) subscribers or 309 for Smart/Addict/Talk 'N Text (P2.50/text) subscribers. Maximum of 3 text answers per question. Send in your answers by March 12 to qualify for the weekly draw on March 14.

Then, read CHAPTER 3 of our mystery in the LIFESTYLE SECTION on Sunday, March 13, and find out how the plot thickens!

To join, register first by texting in this format: INQ Reg <full name>*<complete address>*<age>*<gender>. (Ex. INQ Reg Juan dela Cruz*1234 Ortigas Avenue Pasig*34*M). Send to 2320 for Globe/Touch Mobile and Sun Cellular subscribers or 309 for Smart/Addict/Talk'N Text subscribers. Free registration.

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2BU! PROMO

Win 'American Idol' goodies!

LAST week, we said goodbye to four contestants. This week, we're waiting with baited breath to see who stays and who goes.

To add even more fun to this season's "American Idol," 2bU! and Star World will be giving away exclusive "American Idol" premium items starting this week.

E-mail your answers to the following questions to americanidol_on_starworld@yahoo.com. The first five people who will send correct answers will win.

Question no. 1:

Oscar-winning filmmaker Quentin Tarantino was a guest judge during which season?

Question no. 2:

Perky Paula Abdul showed up with her arm in a sling because of a manicure mishap during which season?

Question no. 3:

Which state produced the most semi-finalists and finalists in "American Idol?"

Question no. 4:

What was the most used song during the American Idol auditions?

Question no. 5

During the March 1 episode, what did rockers Bo Bice and Constantine Maroulis sing?

Winners for Week of February 28:

1. **Michiko Halili**
2. **Elvin**
3. **Nico Manahan**
4. **Dana Almario**
5. **Marnellie Apuya**

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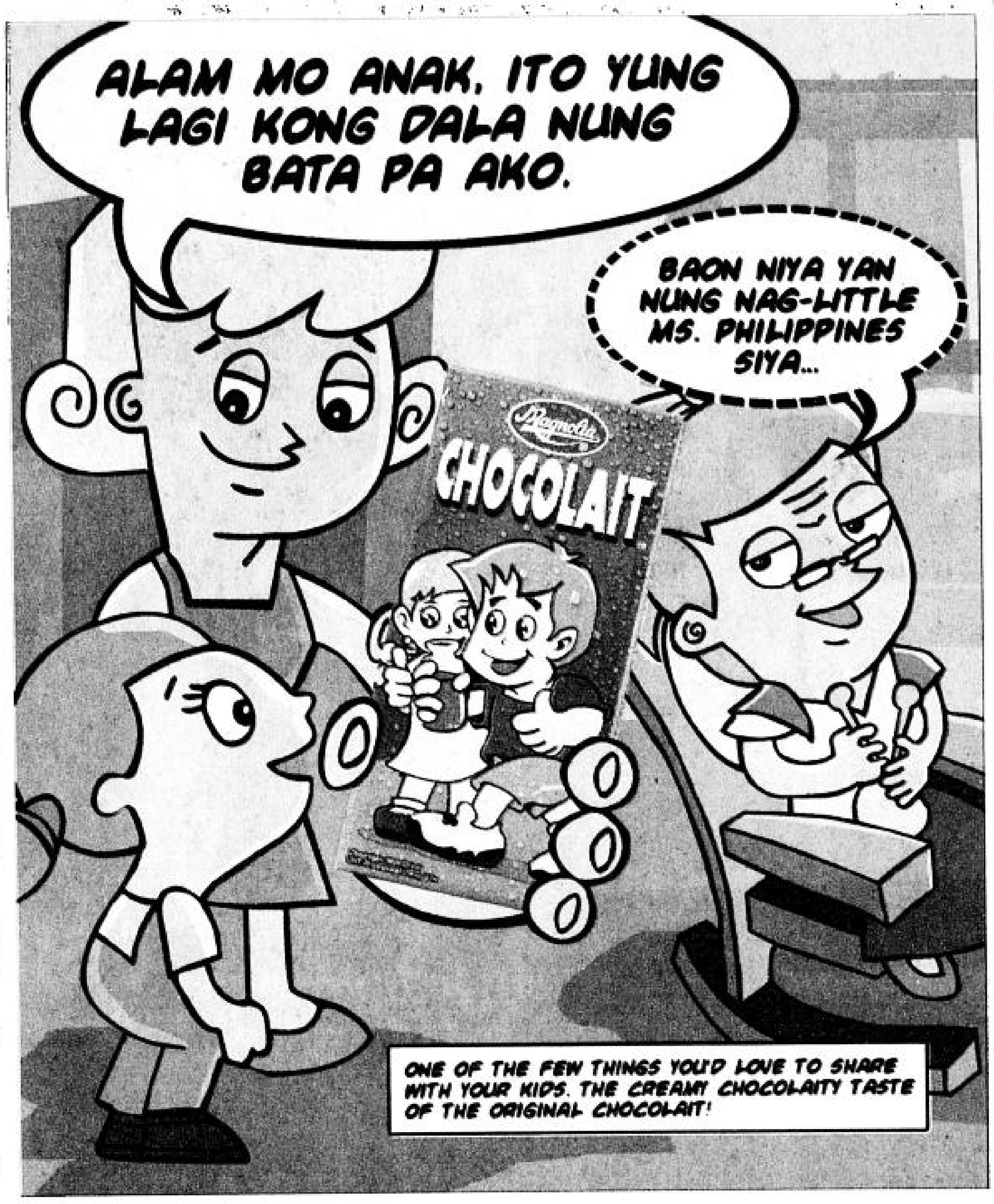
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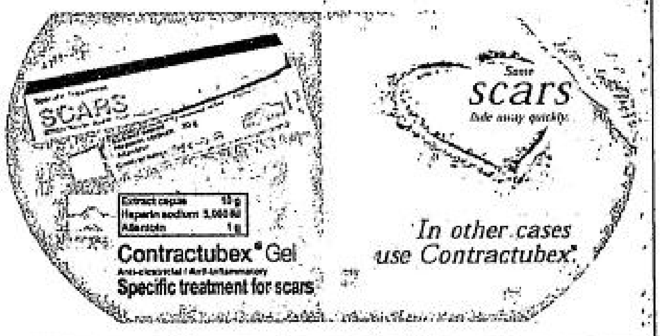
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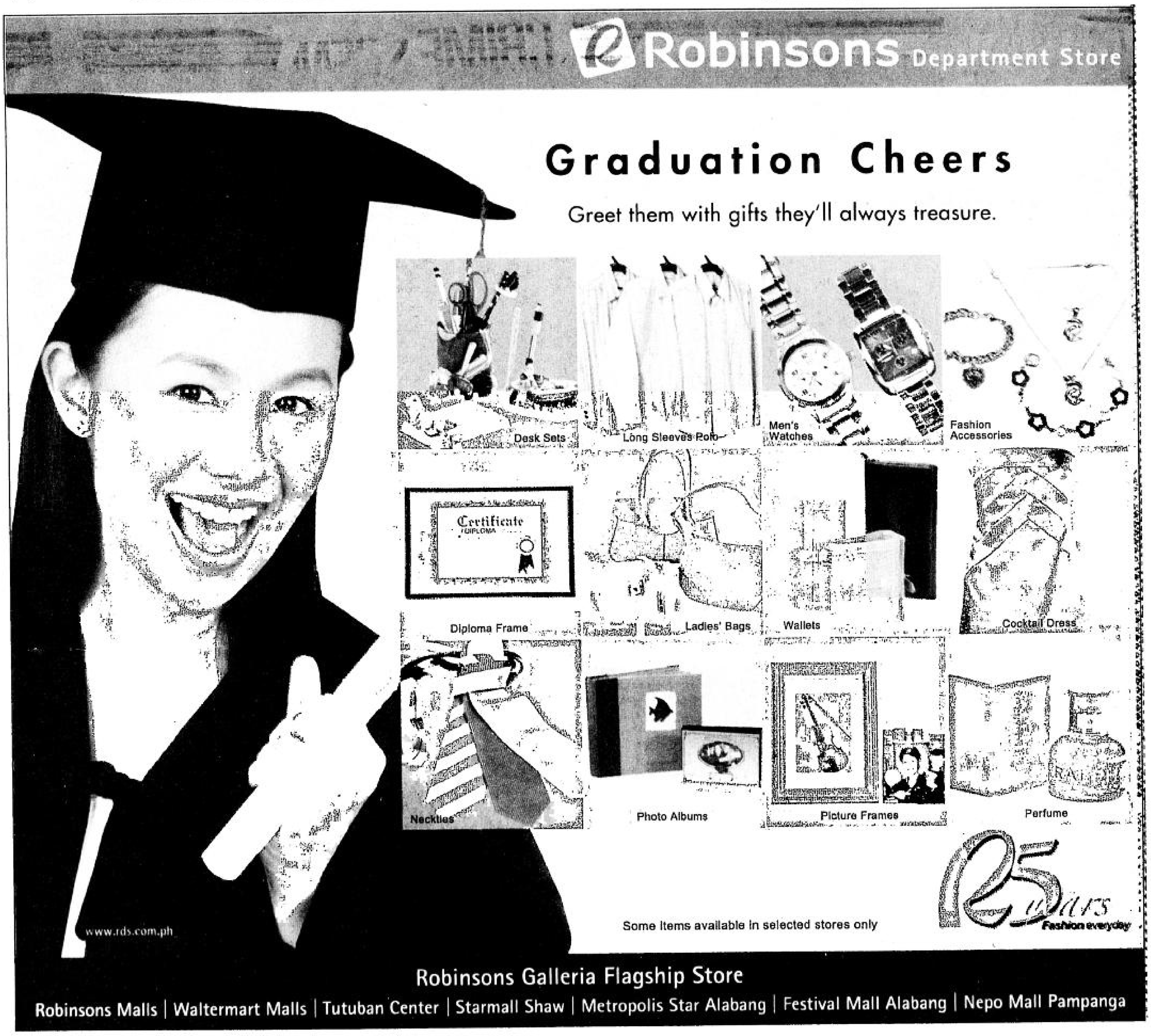
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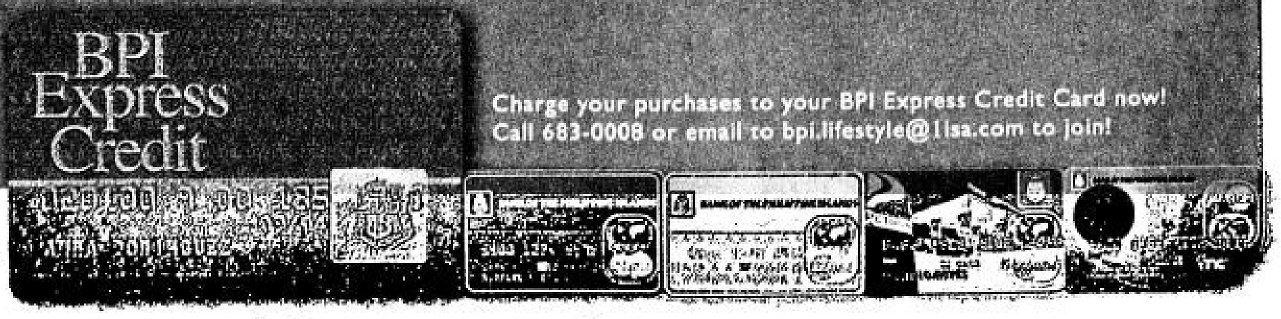


Charge your purchases to your BPI Express Credit Card now!
Call 683-0008 or email to bpi.lifestyle@11sa.com to join!

The BPI VOLVO Lifestyle Promo

BPI Express Credit: Classic/Burgundy, Blue MasterCard, Gold MasterCard, Edge and Mini Edge

Every ₱500 single purchase gives you one raffle entry. To join, register your purchases by calling the promo hotline: 683-0008 for Metro Manila callers; 1-800-10-683-0008 for callers from outside Metro Manila.

You can also register your purchases through email: bpi.lifestyle@11sa.com. Just email the following purchase information as they appear in your charge slip: (1) 16-digit BPI Express Credit card number (2) transaction amount, including centavos (3) transaction date: mm/dd/yy (4) transaction time: hh/mm.

VOLVO V50 Sports Wagon, Prize for BPI Express Credit Classic/Burgundy or BPI Express Credit Blue MasterCard

VOLVO S80 Executive Sedan. Prize for BPI Express Credit Gold MasterCard

NEW! VOLVO S40 Sports Sedan. Prize for BPI Express Credit Edge and Mini Edge*

*Approved by DTI-NCR.

For BPI Express Credit: Classic/Burgundy, Blue MasterCard, Gold MasterCard, Edge and Mini Edge, promo period is from November 15, 2004 to April 30, 2005. See flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3121, Series of 2004.

Petron-BPI Express Credit

Every ₱500 Petron fuel purchase in participating Petron stations gives you one raffle coupon. To join, fill up the coupon and drop in drop boxes at these stations.

VOLVO XC90 SUV, Prize for Petron-BPI Express Credit

For Petron-BPI Express Credit, promo period is from October 21, 2004 to April 30, 2005. See flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2521, Series of 2004

BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS
· A tradition of leadership

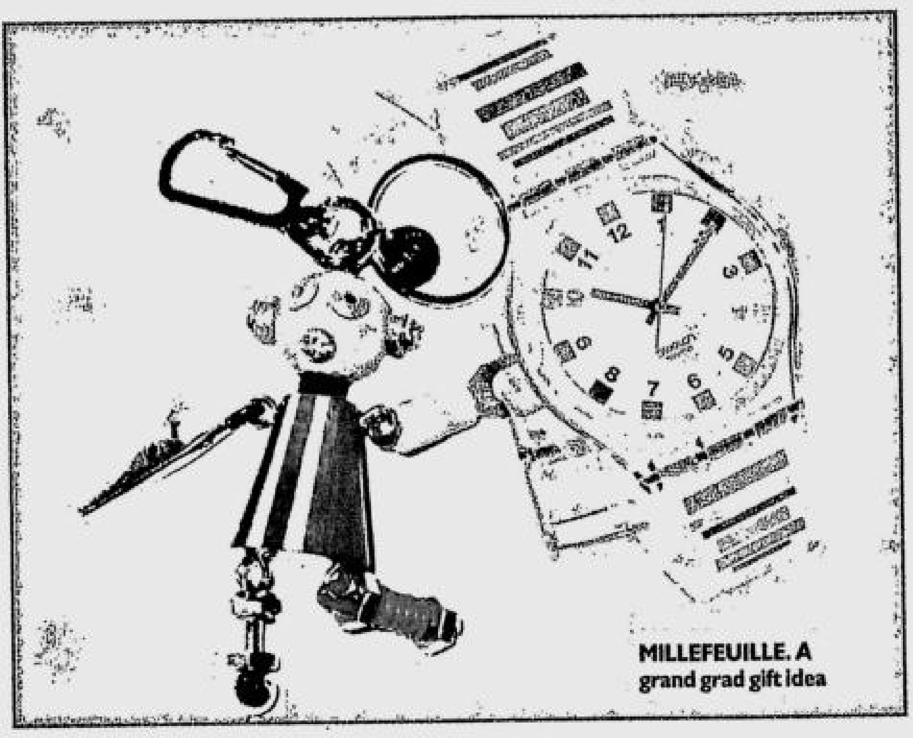
Approved applications during the promo period will also earn raffle entries. For application and inquiries, call BPI Express Phone 89-100, visit any BPI or BPI Family Bank branch or Express Banking Center or log on to www.bpiexpressonline.com. Actual unit may vary from photo.

VOLVO
for life

For feedback, e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Text us your feedback: Inquirer 2bu name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Eye (candy) robots



MILLEFEUILLE. A grand grad gift idea

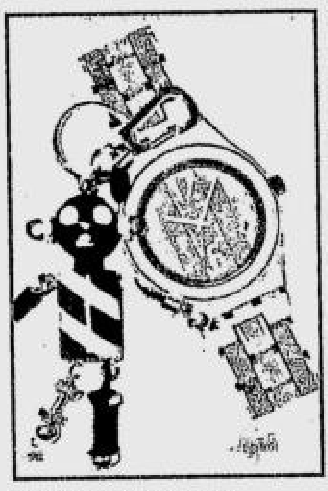
ROBOTS are so in and Swatch Robots are the must-haves in the spring and summer seasons. Get a free Swatch Robot for every Swatch watch purchased until April 10 from Swatch Stores, Swatch Kiosks and Gift Gate.

For spring and summer, Swatch brings a collection of early warning signs—the latest trends and future designs. The forces of design move in, wrap themselves around the limbs of strangers passing by.

A color-splashed collection of bright, lighthearted ornaments, glittering accessories of glamour on display, the line is a mix of the traditional and the new: classic plastic, colored enamels, steel, leather and synthetic textured fabrics.

Theme for this collection is Colors. Not just any color, no. These are bright, light, loud and happy. Like posters and street signs plastered over the cityscape, these Swatches reach out and grab you. Fluorescent orange, lime green, waves of pink and blue. They'll put a smile on your face, seduce you with their plastic charms.

Gift Gate Inc. is the exclusive distributor of Swatch in the Philippines.



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NINA • NYOY VOLANTE
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SAN PEDRO, LAGUNA 520-0569
DASMA, CAVITE (046) 416-3439
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BATANGAS CITY (043) 723-7257
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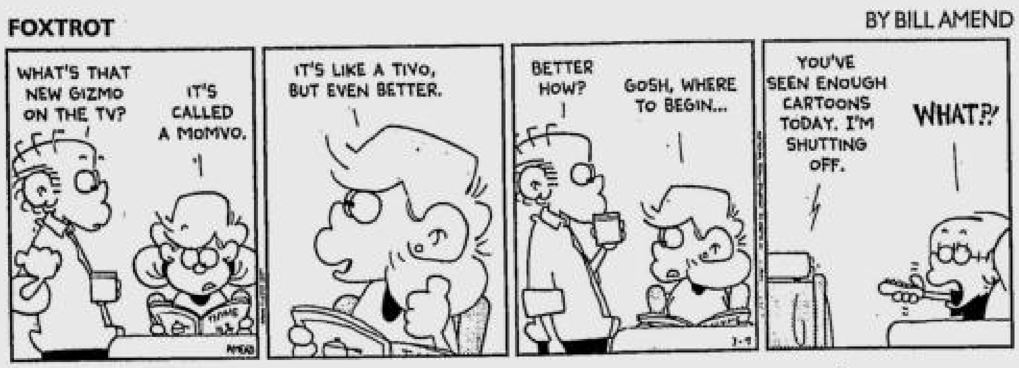
ka-gana-gana
NEW!
Creamy Tuna
MACARONI
ka-g greenwich
Here's another irresistible pasta treat from Greenwich! New Creamy Tuna Macaroni. Go ahead, take a bite. Savor the delightful flavor of tuna, mushrooms, bell pepper, cream and cheese melting in your mouth. Delicious! It only proves that when it comes to pasta, you can never go wrong with Greenwich.

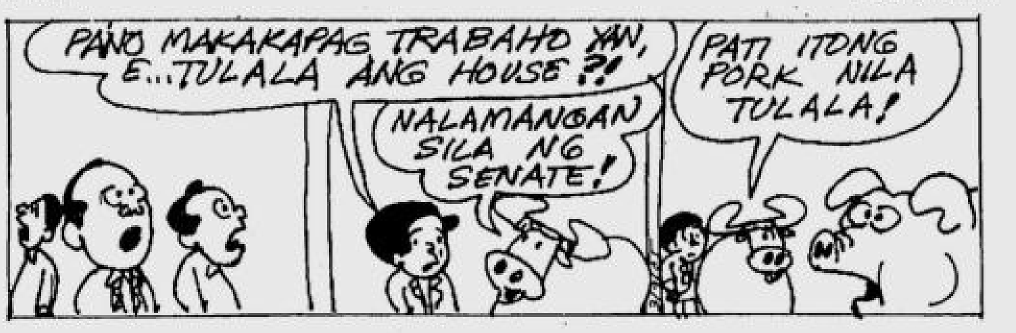
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHAT'S THAT NEW GIZMO ON THE TV?
IT'S CALLED A MOMVO.
IT'S LIKE A TIVO, BUT EVEN BETTER.
BETTER HOW?
GOSH, WHERE TO BEGIN...
YOU'VE SEEN ENOUGH CARTOONS TODAY. I'M SHUTTING OFF.
WHAT?!
3-9

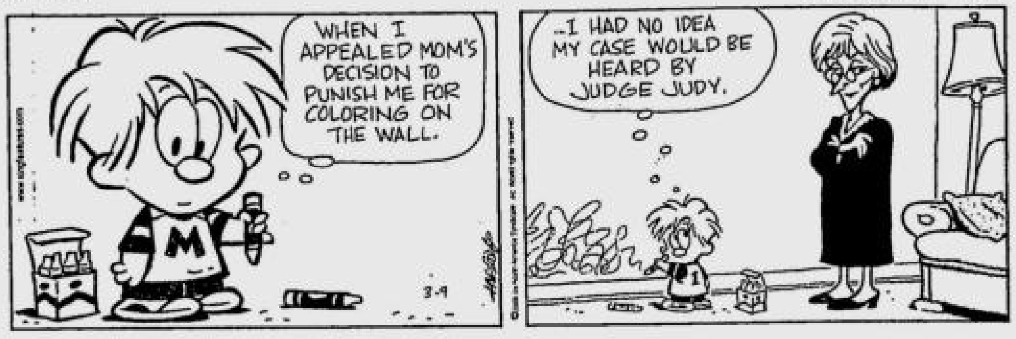
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


PANO MAKAKAPAG TRABAHO YAN, E...TULALA ANG HOUSE?!
NALAMANGAN SILA NG SENATE!
PATI ITONG PORK NILA TULALA!

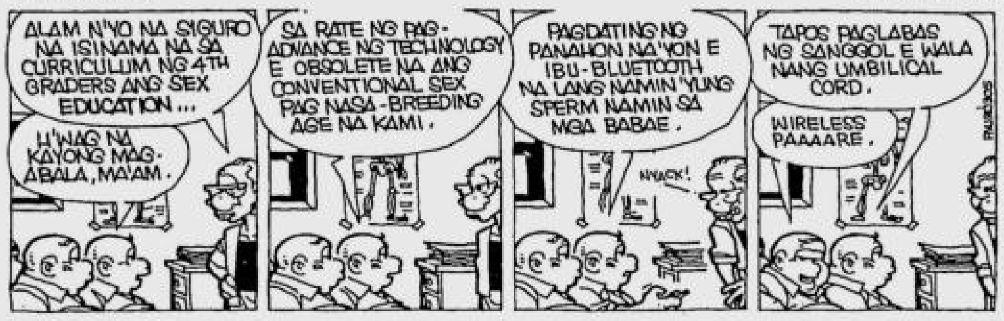
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


WHEN I APPEALED MOM'S DECISION TO PUNISH ME FOR COLORING ON THE WALL.
...I HAD NO IDEA MY CASE WOULD BE HEARD BY JUDGE JUDY.
3-9

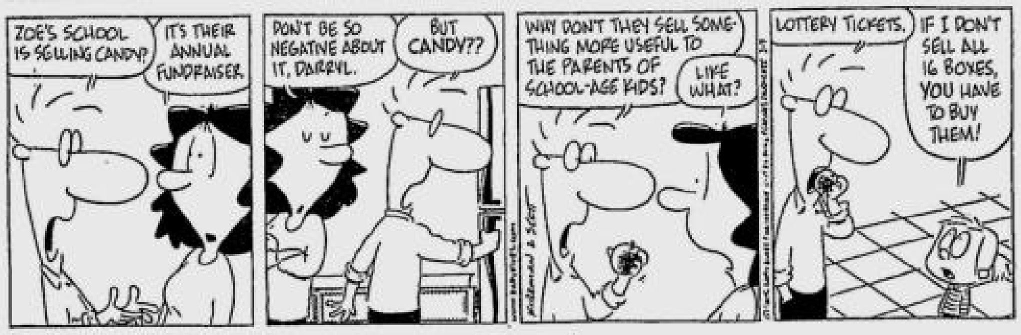
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ALAM N'YO NA SIGURO NA ISINAMA NA SA CURRICULUM NG 4TH GRADERS ANG SEX EDUCATION...
U'WAG NA KAYONG MAG-ABALA, MA'AM.
SA RATE NG PAG-ADVANCE NG TECHNOLOGY E OBSOLETE NA ANG CONVENTIONAL SEX PAG NASA-BREEDING AGE NA KAMI.
PAGDATING NG PANAHON NA'YON E IBU-BLUETOOTH NA LANG NAMIN 'YUNG SPERM NAMIN SA MGA BABAE.
NYACK!
TAPOS PAGLABAS NG SANGGOL E WALA NANG UMBILICAL CORD.
WIRELESS PAAAARE.

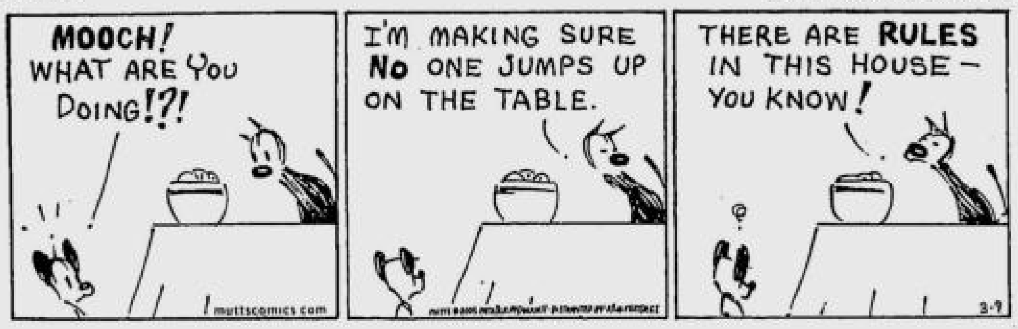
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


ZOE'S SCHOOL IS SELLING CANDY?
IT'S THEIR ANNUAL FUNDRAISER.
DON'T BE SO NEGATIVE ABOUT IT, DARRYL.
BUT CANDY??
WHY DON'T THEY SELL SOMETHING MORE USEFUL TO THE PARENTS OF SCHOOL-AGE KIDS?
LIKE WHAT?
LOTTERY TICKETS.
IF I DON'T SELL ALL 16 BOXES, YOU HAVE TO BUY THEM!

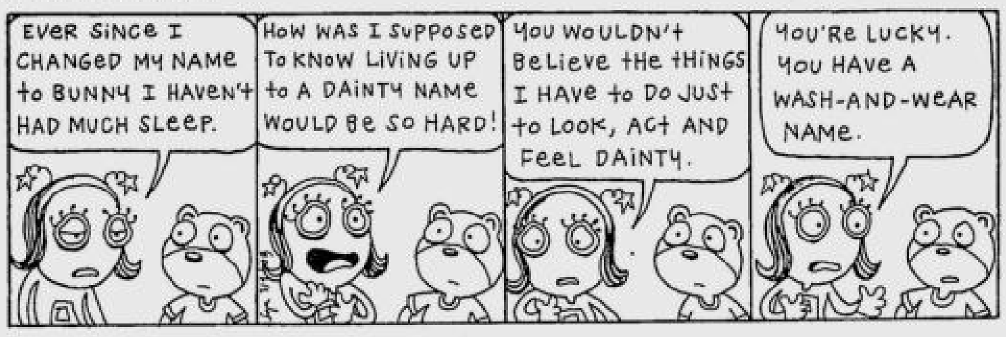
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MOOCH! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?!
I'M MAKING SURE NO ONE JUMPS UP ON THE TABLE.
THERE ARE RULES IN THIS HOUSE – YOU KNOW!
muttscomics.com
3-9

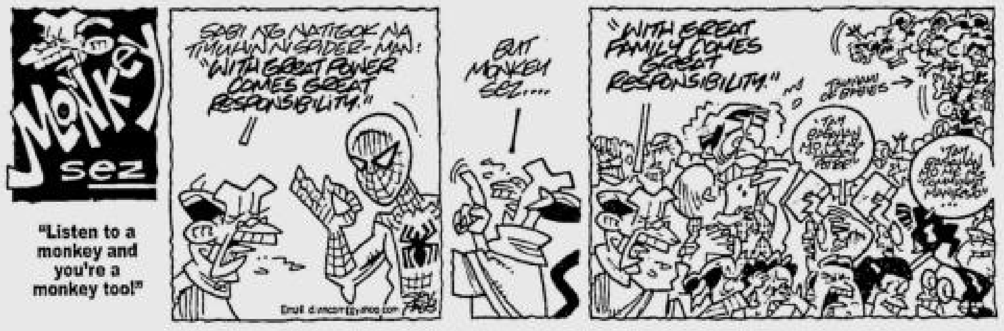
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


EVER SINCE I CHANGED MY NAME TO BUNNY I HAVEN'T HAD MUCH SLEEP.
HOW WAS I SUPPOSED TO KNOW LIVING UP TO A DAINTY NAME WOULD BE SO HARD!
YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE THE THINGS I HAVE TO DO JUST TO LOOK, ACT AND FEEL DAINTY.
YOU'RE LUCKY. YOU HAVE A WASH-AND-WEAR NAME.

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


MONKEY SEZ
"Listen to a monkey and you're a monkey too!"
SABI NG NATITOK NA TIMUHUN NI SPIDER-MAN! "WITH GREAT POWER COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY."
BUT MONKEY SEZ....
"WITH GREAT FAMILY COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY."

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a fine mind. You are a visionary who is curious about almost anything. You can trust your instincts because you have strong psychic abilities. Even though you are highly imaginative, you are also practical. Because of this, you often have lots of responsibilities. The year ahead is full of new, fresh, exciting beginnings. Enjoy! **Birthdate of:** Raul Julia, actor; Lil Bow Wow, young rapper; Juliette Binoche, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): If you can squeeze a few moments of solitude into your day—just for yourself—you'll be pleased. You need a bit of peace and quiet right now. (You need to restore your soul.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Accept invitations to talk to friends, especially female friends. Someone needs to confide in you. (Perhaps you're the one who has to talk to someone.) Be friendly.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You might be singled out for something in a public way today. You are in the limelight. Because of this, be aware of your actions and your self-image.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Philosophical, religious and political discussions intrigue you today. You have your opinions! You are a sign with a lot of common sense, that's for sure.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You're concerned about two completely different areas today: money or possessions and your love life. Both of these are things you do not take casually. Oh, no!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Because today's Moon opposes your sign, you have to go more than halfway when dealing with others. Remember that listening and hearing are not the same thing.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Work hard to get better-organized at work today. This will please you enormously. When you reduce the clutter in your life, it reduces the clutter in your mind. (It's true.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a lovely day for playful activities with children. It's also an excellent day to plan a vacation or go on one. The bottom line is simply this: You want to have fun!

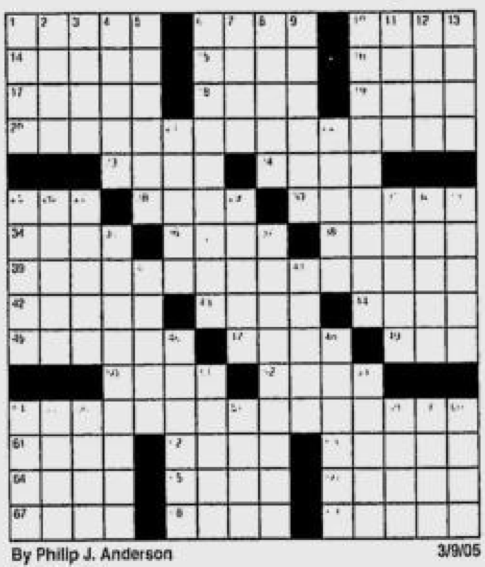
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Time spent at home will be time well-spent today. Family matters and domestic issues need your attention now. Some of you are also focused on real estate.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is an excellent day for negotiations, wheeling and dealing, buying and selling, and shopping. You're busy, and you're getting a lot done.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Although yesterday was a poor day for financial matters, today is an excellent one. Sign the papers; do the deal. Move forward with plans for dealing with your possessions or making money.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Today the Moon is in your sign. You feel more empowered and certainly more emotional about anything and everything. (It's a good day to buy shoes.)

DAILY CROSSWORD



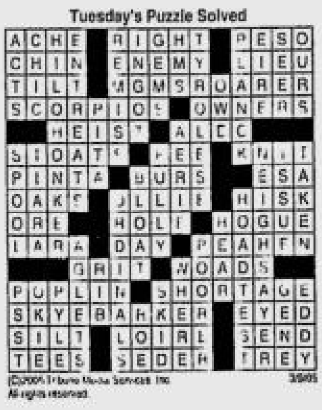
By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

3/9/05

ACROSS
1 Iowa commune
6 Scoffing laughs
10 Humdinger
14 Prospector
15 Touched down
16 "__ the Explorer"
17 Relating to a pelvic bone
18 California wine valley
19 Psych final?
20 Financial talks?
23 Organic compound
24 Seine tributary
25 Highland hat
28 Looks over
30 Patriot Hale
34 Some distance
36 Skilled
38 Actress Davis
39 Financial cleanup?
42 Rainbow: pref.
43 Make over
44 Dundee dagger
45 Baseball grouping
47 Audible weeping
49 Foreign student's subj.
50 Dismantle
52 Sp. miss
54 Financial buoyancy?
61 Lounge lizard's look
62 "Joanie Loves Chachi" star
63 Honda's robot
64 Exiled Roman poet
65 Speak like Sylvester
66 Of an arm bone
67 Hodges and Gerard
68 Art Deco designer
69 Hades' river of forgetfulness

DOWN
1 In the thick of
2 "Venus de __"
3 Indigo plant
4 Fraser of tennis
5 Esoteric
6 Kind of mustache
7 Lenin Peak's range
8 River horse
9 Soviet dictator
10 Dashboard gauges
11 __ bene
12 Idle or Clapton
13 Slightly blue
21 Princely
22 Type of orange
25 Sri Lankan people
26 Ere
27 Extreme enthusiasm
29 Swings around
31 Poet Heinrich
32 Bancroft and Meara
33 Actor Conrad
35 Communist groups
37 Intrusive instrument
40 Robin of baseball
41 Portuguese currency unit
46 Suitable as food
48 Minneapolis neighbor
51 Broadcasting
53 Supermarket passageway
54 Apply the whip
55 Strauss of jeans fame
56 Trompe l'__
57 Essence
58 Color shade
59 Asian nursemaid
60 Folk stories

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved



A	C	H	E	■	R	I	G	H	T	■	P	E	S	O
C	H	I	N	■	E	N	E	M	Y	■	L	I	E	U
T	I	L	T	■	M	G	M	S	R	O	A	R	E	R
S	C	O	R	P	I	O	S	■	O	W	N	E	R	S
■	■	H	E	I	S	T	■	A	L	E	C	■	■	■
S	T	O	A	T	S	■	F	E	E	■	K	N	I	T
P	I	N	T	A	■	B	U	R	S	■	■	E	S	A
O	A	K	S	■	O	L	L	I	E	■	H	I	S	K
O	R	E	■	■	H	O	L	T	■	H	O	G	U	E
I	A	R	A	■	D	A	Y	■	P	E	A	H	E	N
■	■	■	G	R	I	T	■	W	O	A	D	S	■	■
P	U	P	L	I	N	■	S	H	O	R	T	A	G	E
S	K	Y	E	B	A	K	K	E	R	■	E	Y	E	D
S	I	L	T	■	L	O	I	R	E	■	S	E	N	D
T	E	E	S	■	S	E	D	E	R	■	T	R	E	Y

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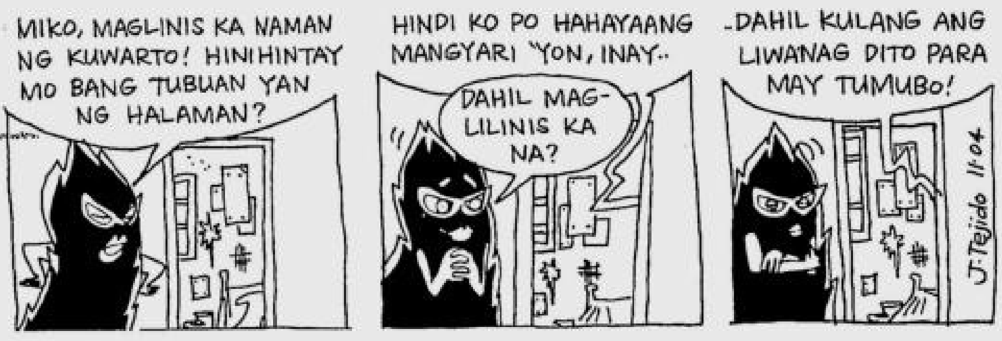
3/8/05

GASFAR
fuel saving tips
CHECK BATTERY.
Check the terminals for loose connection and accumulated dirt. Check water and voltage level of the battery as well.

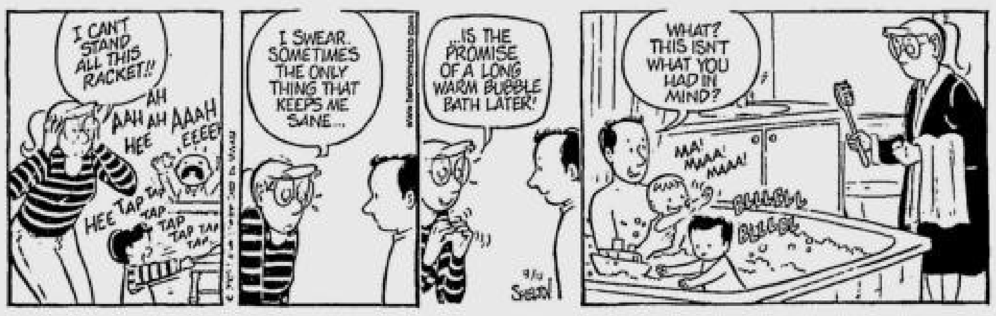
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MIKO, MAGLINIS KA NAMAN NG KUWARTO! HINIHINTAY MO BANG TUBUAN YAN NG HALAMAN?
HINDI KO PO HAHAYAANG MANGYARI 'YON, INAY..
DAHIL MAG-LILINIS KA NA?
-DAHIL KULANG ANG LIWANAG DITO PARA MAY TUMUBO!
J. Tejido 11-04

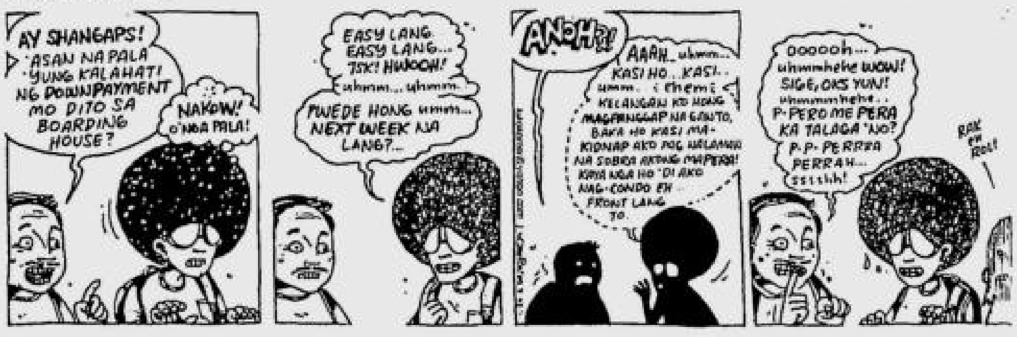
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


I CAN'T STAND ALL THIS RACKET!!
AH AAH AH AAAH
HEE
EEEE!
HEE TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP
I SWEAR. SOMETIMES THE ONLY THING THAT KEEPS ME SANE...
...IS THE PROMISE OF A LONG WARM BUBBLE BATH LATER!
WHAT? THIS ISN'T WHAT YOU HAD IN MIND?
MA! MAA! MAA!
BLUBBL
BLUBBL

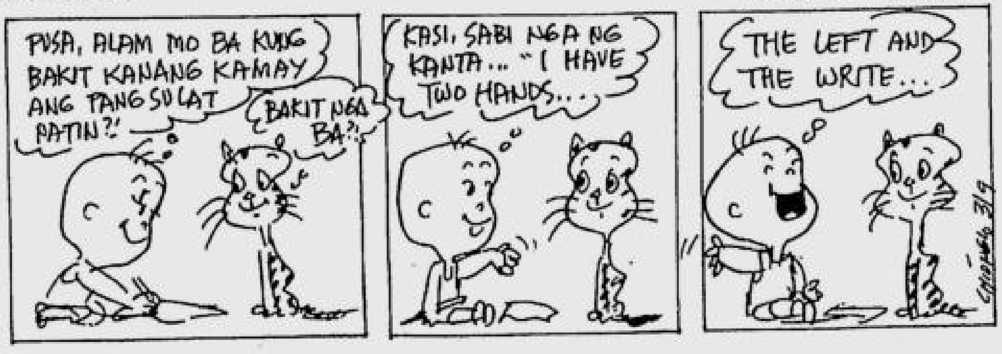
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


AY SHANGAPS! 'ASAN NA PALA 'YUNG KALAHATI NG DOWNPAYMENT MO DITO SA BOARDING HOUSE?
NAKOW! O'NGA PALA!
EASY LANG. EASY LANG... TSK! HWOOH! uhmm... uhmm..
PWEDE HONG umm... NEXT WEEK NA LANG?...
ANOH?!
AARH... uhmm... KASI HO... KASI... umm.. ehem! KELANGAN KO HONG MAGPANGGAP NA GANITO, BAKA HO KASI MA-KIDNAP AKO PAG NALAMAN NA SOBRA AKONG MAPERA! KAYA NGA HO 'DI AKO NAG-CONDO EH... FRONT LANG TO.
Oooooh... uhmmhehe WOW! SIGE, OKS YUN! uhmmmhehe... P-PERO ME PERA KA TALAGA 'NO? P-P-PERRRA PERRAH... ssssshh!
RAK EN ROL!

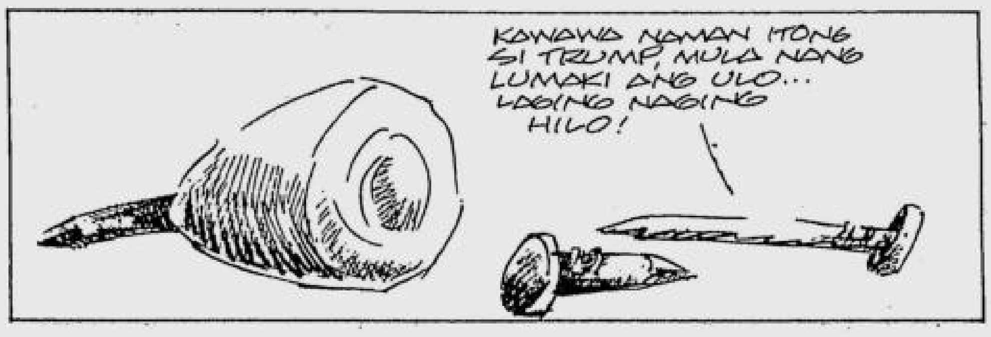
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PUSA, ALAM MO BA KUNG BAKIT KANANG KAMAY ANG PANG SULAT NATIN?!
BAKIT NGA BA?!
KASI, SABI NGA NG KANTA... "I HAVE TWO HANDS...
THE LEFT AND THE WRITE...
Chionglo 3/9

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


KAWAWA NAMAN ITONG SI TRUMP, MULA NONG LUMAKI ANG ULO... LAGING NAGING HILO!

Bull's eye for a good buy

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

HAVE YOU ever been duped by a sweet-talking salesperson into buying a bunch of products you don't really need?

Picture this familiar scene: You walk into a department store, looking for a replacement of the moisturizer that recently ran out. On the way to the counter of your favorite brand, you are waylaid by salespeople holding up bottles of perfume and tubes of the latest lipsticks, eager to spray scents on your wrists and smear color on your skin. One of the displays looks interesting—a new line of products has just been launched, and there is a small table full of testers and a sign inviting you to try the latest items.

You are drawn to the display.

The nice saleslady swoops down on you, analyzing and criticizing your complexion. What are the products you use now, she asks. You name them, and she shakes her head, muttering "tsk-tsk-tsk."

Her disapproving manner intimidates you, and despite your relatively good skin, you allow yourself to be led to a nearby chair and be smothered with all sorts of concoctions. When you look into the mirror 30 minutes later, you look like a new woman.

Delighted, you ask the salesperson what products have been applied on your face. Ah, she says, and enumerates the new products, from facial wash to eye creams, and adds that you need to take care of your skin more. You look into the mirror again and see new wrinkles that didn't seem to be there before—you aren't sure what caused them, sun damage or the price of the whole new line of products, but the sight of them worries you, and you agree to purchase them.

Fifteen minutes and several thousands of pesos later, you walk out of the department store, arms laden with bottles that eventually will sit on your dresser, unused and forgotten. You aren't sure if you really need the products, or if the salesperson just wanted to make a sale (as they are supposed to do.) However, it leaves you—the consumer—in a very undesirable place. You are left wondering, "What am I supposed to do?" It's a case of being damned if you do, damned if you don't—buy the products that you might not need and waste your hard-earned bucks, or ignore the salesperson and allow your appearance to suffer.

Fortunately, for *kikay* consumers, there's a way out. Lancôme, one of the top skincare and cosmetics brands, came up with a high-tech system for you to know if you really need a product or not—no sweet talking here. It recently launched Diagnôs Expert, a computer-based program that evaluates your skin and helps you determine what you really need in order to get a better complexion.

The Diagnôs Expert makes use of two cameras and three sensors to come up with the most accurate evaluation possible. The first camera, which magnetizes your skin to 60 times its size, measures pores and finds spots invisible to the naked eye. The second one, a special wrinkle camera, takes note of areas that are most likely to form wrinkles.

The first sensor, the Sebumeter, measures the quantity of sebum on your T-zone (forehead, nose and chin) and U-zone (cheeks and chin), while the Corneometer measures the level of moisturization. The last sensor, the Elastometer, measures skin firmness.

I went to the Lancôme counter dreading the diagnosis—I was afraid that the skincare expert would cringe at the size of my pores, lack of hydration, dark pigmentation, etc. And I was especially wary of being offered a bunch of products upon seeing the condition of my skin. However, it turned out better than I thought. Monette, the skincare expert, asked me questions all throughout and explained every step of the procedure. She showed me magnified photos of my skin and told me why it looked the way it did.

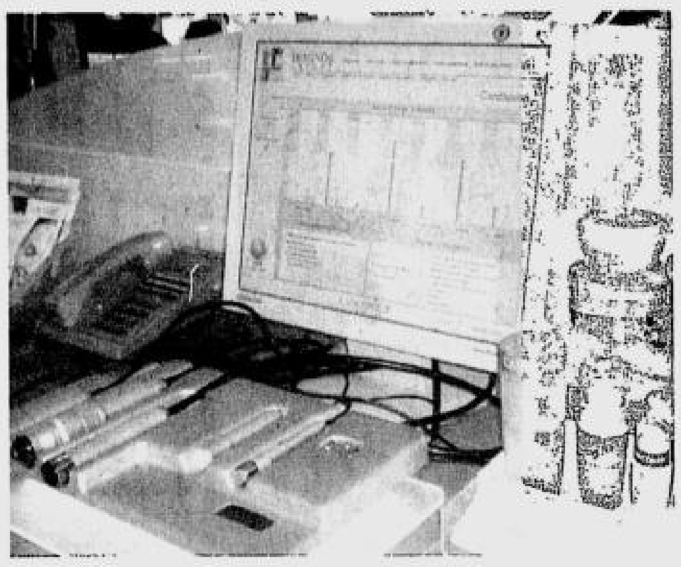
Final evaluation? Not as bad as I thought. In fact, by thinking that maybe my skin was too oily (as many girls in a tropical country are apt to do), I wasn't hydrating it sufficiently—Monette pointed out that the light moisturizer I was using was insufficient, as it left dry areas. And long hours in front of the computer gave me under-eye circles, almost-invisible spots that would darken in time, if not attended to (which made my almost obsessive use of sunscreen useless, as I often neglected to apply it).

So when the 15-minute session ended, I knew what I was doing wrong (so that's why those darn blemishes won't come off!), and what I need. Monette assured me that I didn't need to purchase anything in a hurry, only to maintain the good habits and get some of the recommended products such as heavier moisturizer and eye cream, which I didn't think I would need for at least five more years.

So it turns out that self-evaluation isn't always correct, skin-deep or otherwise—it never hurts to get another expert to take a long, hard look at you and say exactly what you're doing wrong.

Call 8133739 or 6334636 or visit Lancôme counters.

E-mail biancaconsunji@yahoo.com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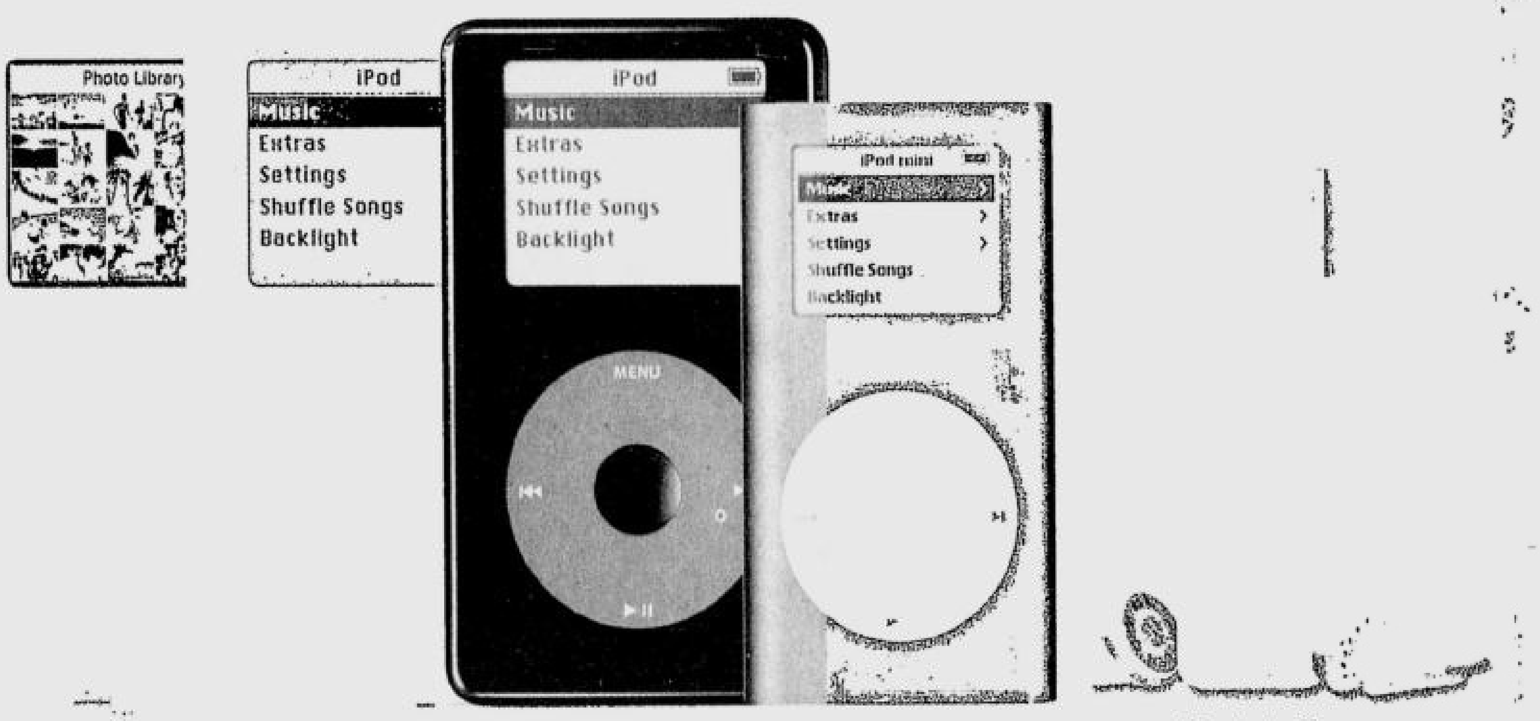
A New Miracle
LANCÔME'S skin expert Monette analyzes the author's skin.



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SARI SARI SUMMER 2005. From pastel paradise to red-hot looks, off the rack and into your closets

BLUE BELLE. Joey Mead is now AXN host based in Singapore.

G STAR. Gorgeous standout Georgina Wilson

BANGS with a vengeance. Ciara Sevilla in romantic white

Sex, lies and MMS video

MAGIC DUO. Gela Laurel and Happy David

S FILES. Bianca Valerio, Denise Albert and soon-to-be-dad Paolo Paraiso

Tim Yap

I'm super tempted to come up with my own sex video.

It seems like everyone these days has one—it has even surpassed the poncho trend. Everybody wants to be his own honcho in his own video ala **Jenna Jameson-Peter North.**

Technology makes it easy for us to live out our fantasies and indulge in capturing moments—and I'm talking more than just Kodak moments here.

While I really have nothing against recording intimate moments, the problem arises when your most important tool (your mobile phone, of course) gets to the hands of the wrong people. Hello, **Paris Hilton**?

Just recently I lost my mobile phone, and I can just imagine the amount of numbers—from **Sharon Cuneta** to **Ethel Booba**—that were stored in there. Good thing I had erased all my photos and videos.

Ages ago, the issue was PDA (public display of affection). Now it's TDA (technological display of affection—or for that matter, arousal).

This issue has two sides: one, protesting and declaring that intimate moments should not be recorded at all; the other, insisting that young people in love (or in lust) can express whatever they wish to. Perhaps reaching a middle ground is the best solution.

'Y Speak' na!

The issue was the topic on ABS-CBN's youth forum show "Y Speak" where I was a guest judge recently. I found the show very informative for the Pinoy youth. The taping happened at Don Bosco Institute-Mandaluyong. The students were really into the discussion. And **Bianca Gonzales** looked great.

Finally, an educational and entertaining alternative to all the mud-slinging show-biz crap we see all over. "Y Speak" made us think of real-life issues. Our "Kapamilya" *really* cared for us.

Or so we thought.

Last week, I found the show replaced by some celebrity-reality-dare show. Yup, another of those celeb-dare programs. Yawn, yawn. As if there weren't enough programs with personalities doing crazy stuff. The real "Extra Challenge" (oops, sorry) is for TV programs to make us think.

"Y Speak" was able to do that, and more. My question to the network's bigwigs—where is it now?

Oscars fizz

I was in the Maldives when the world was going gaga over the Oscars, but a week before that, the folks from Sari-Sari Store had thrown a party to honor paparazzi-worthy fashion for the city's VIP set amid the Oscars' buzz.

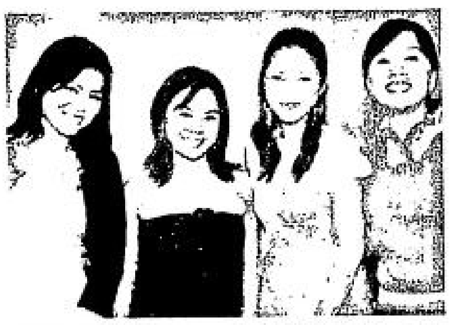
Paseo Uno was wall-to-wall (and pool-to-pool) with Sari-Sari celebrities who arrived in Jaguars and fully decked outfits. **Denise Albert**, Sari-Sari's star marketing woman, along with owners **Marni** and **Mar G Ocampo** made sure the guests felt red-carpet worthy.

Speaking of sex videos, I happened to bump into one of the Sari-Sari honorees in my dressing room. We were having our usual tête-à-tête, and all of a sudden he brought up his own sex video! "You've seen it, I'm sure!" He said with a cocksure (pardon the pun) attitude.

He seemed mighty proud of it. "So what happened to you after the incident?" I inquired, seriously considering having my own. "Well, I've become a sex symbol," he said—with **Maurice Arcache's** permission—without batting an eyelash. "And I didn't lose anything, really. There's another version with me and a girl..." he continued with his bedroom story while admiring his own reflection in the mirror. Yup, nothing except your dignity.

But I admire his guts to strut like Deuce Bigalow and throw all caution to the wind. **Thelma San Juan** may be wrong. She said we are a "generation of strippers." I think we are a generation of porn stars.

LOVIN' LANCOME. Sobee Dueñas and Sandra Araullo at Le Soufflé Rockwell



TEEN TALK with Anne Bella, Marcie Linao, Lora Gahol and Mariel Chua

MIRACLE WHIP. Minelli Bautista, Vicky Tensuan, Risa Francisco, Lancome's Sobee Dueñas and Blue Carreon

FRAGRANT FOUR. Ramon Ortiz-Luis, Cyril Manadlang, Pam Ayson and Ryan Tordesillas

Mania and Magic

Perfume launches are aplenty. The market for scents increases like the number of reality shows this side of town.

And why not? These bottled fantasies are the closest one can get to attaining luxury—one whiff and you're in Armani land. Another spritz and you feel magic!

A couple of weeks back, the media elite flocked to the Embassy, this time for lunch, to witness what Italian stallion **Giorgio Armani** had created for the contemporary woman.

The result was Armani Mania Femme, which was launched via a dance performance by **Myra Beltran** and a musical performance by **Anya Santos.** Models sashayed around, spraying the pink champagne-colored fragrance.

Speaking of pink, Lancôme also unveiled its latest fragrance, Miracle So Magic, the younger and sweeter version of the best selling Miracle line.

A pinker-than-pink lunch was hosted at Le Souffle-Rockwell that would put Elle Woods to shame.

To cap it off, they selected a sparkly set of new women who embodied that magical outlook. Among them were accessories innovator **Happy David** and triathlete **Sandra Araullo.**

Here's to more empowered (and fragrant) women!

culte femme

JOIN THE CULTE. Hindy Weber-Tantoco's Culte Femme Summer Sojourn '05, as photographed by Mark Nicdao

Cult of culte

While we're on the topic of women, so many of them are flocking to Rustan's these days. Yes, Rustan's VP and our town's most eligible hotshot, **Joel Tantoco**, is single, but that's only the second reason why girls are flocking to our favorite department store.

Culte Femme, the design baby of fashion favorite **Hindy Weber-Tantoco**, has been one hot crowd drawer for trend-setting cityphiles who strut it out at work during the day and stretch it to the max at night.

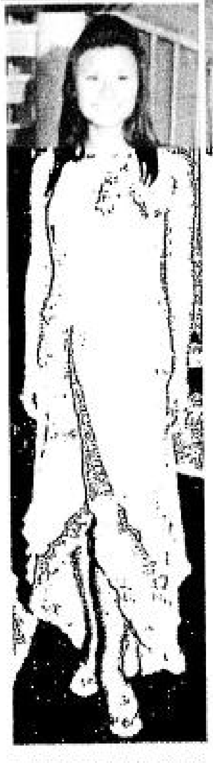
These work-play ensembles in playful stripes and colorful prints are snatched the minute they get to the shelves. Hindy Tantoco has the Midas touch. Girls go gaga over her designs. (The guys however, go gaga over her—check her out in Culte Femme's campaign, taken by super-in-demand photographer **Mark Nicdao.**)

So if you want to be the first, Culte Femme is launching its sizzling Summer Sojourn '05. Hindy will unveil sensually sun-drenched styles for her "Palm Beach Party" collection tonight at Embassy Superclub.

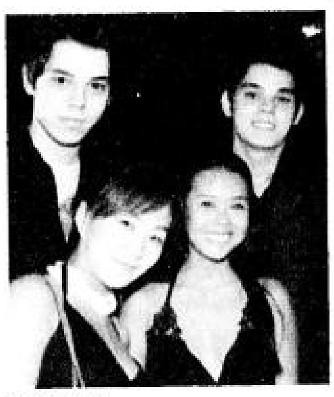
And if you're really lucky, Hindy herself might be there to assist you with your summer wear choices at Embassy Cafeteria (in between the MTV office and Embassy Cuisine at The Fort). Culte Femme is having a one-day-only boutique from 12 noon to 2 a.m. "It's hard core Femme all the way!" says the sassy designer.

And you don't need your own sex tape to do that.

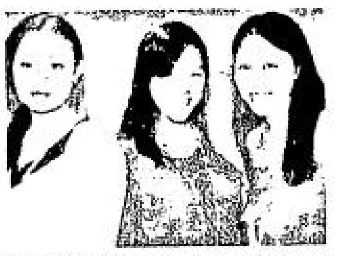
SARI-SARI OSCAR FEVER. Red carpet style at Paseo Uno's Lounge



A-LIST STYLE. MTV hot babe Anne Matoto



SUP, SOP? Raymond and Richard Gutierrez with Hannah and Denise at the Sari-Sari party



PINK THREE. Erica Paredes, Jane Kingsu and Lancome's Zerl Chan

ETC, ETC... ETC VJ Sam Oh with L'Oreal's Celine Gabriel

Oh my caption!

LAST week as I was swimming in the azure waters of the Maldives, I got a million text messages about my (mis)captioned photos—proof of this paper's wide, wild circulation. Nope, these ladies aren't Kate Torralba and Myrza Sison (you all know how they look—so I can't fool you). They are the party scene's favorite designing duo, Juliet and Mimi Tan. Also, Cessie Colayco, the former head honcho of L'oreal, is now with Rustans. But the lady above, of course, is Loungerie designer Celine lopez, here with man-about-town, eligible heartthrob and soon-to-be birthday celebrator Ricky Delgado. Sowee.

Jars of Clay shows some love from above

By Angela V. Ignacio
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Mags Paguyo

THE AMERICAN band Jars of Clay recently served up two unforgettable performances in Cebu and Manila.

Churning out classic chart toppers such as "Flood," "Five Candles" and "Unforgetful You," the Christian-inspired rock band gave Filipinos what they had never had before: nearly two hours of good, clean fun and uplifting music, plus a fan's live marriage proposal to his girlfriend of 10 years, right on stage.

"It was great—we really had an amazing time," said frontman Dan Haseltine. "It's always surprising to leave the US and just realize that people know our songs… It's fantastic."

The quartet (minus guitarist Matt Odmark, who had to pull out of the tour for personal reasons) stopped by the Philippines in the middle of their US tour, and the guys were simply overwhelmed by the hearty response. Haseltine said, "One of my friends back in high school was a Filipino. He was a great, warm, caring person, and we come over here and it's just like everybody seems that way. It's really amazing—it's like [it's] part of the culture, and it's a nice change."

Six albums, sixteen No. 1 radio hits, three Grammys and over five million album copies sold—mighty impressive stats for a band that started out in a tiny college campus in Greenville, Illinois.

Mainstream

Jars broke into mainstream consciousness with the phenomenal track, "Flood," which swept the world-weary public off its feet and breathed new life to diverse genres.

A decade later, Jars of Clay is still riding high on the wave of success, consistently flooding the airwaves with certified chart-busting singles, the most recent of which is the upbeat ditty, "Show You Love."

If you're curious as to where the band got its name, check out Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians (4:11).

Keyboardist Charlie Lowell explained: "'Jars of Clay' is kind of a metaphor for frailty… We appreciate the brokenness of the world. I think that as humans, we're prone to isolation and yet we have great need for community and relationship, and that part of the brokenness of this life is being able to rely on each other—where one's weak, another can be strong."

Apparently, the years nor the stereotypes haven't stifled the band's creativity, but the guys admit to having had their share of uninspired moments. "Year after year we'd come back to that place where we have to start writing for another record, and we'd kind of wonder if the well has dried up, if this is all we have," guitarist Steve Mason said. "[But] every time we do that, something comes out of the four of us being together that encourages us even further."

Breaking the mold

Gospel and mainstream, Christian and secular, alternative and acoustic. The differences between these musical categories may be worlds apart, but as far as Jars fans are concerned, the band draws its appeal from each.

When you talk about Jars of Clay, the word "rock" takes on an entirely different meaning. Solid, steady and unflinching, their music has weathered the years and even individual quirks, effortlessly cutting across genres and beliefs.

Part of their appeal is that the rock elements of their music doesn't have to be about angst and violence. However, the band does acknowledge suffering and sadness as well as joy, but at a deeper, more spiritual level.

"It's a huge privilege to enter into the suffering of a person, to know a person well enough that you can know their story and be a part of it," Haseltine said. "We want people to know that that's a huge part of our impact."

The band has always been upfront about its Christian roots, but as Haseltine put it in another interview, "We don't try to be an evangelical band." Safely put, they're Christian by faith, not by musical genre.

"As far as the process of making music [goes], our faith forms our perspective—it's the window through which we can see the world," Mason explained. "It pretty much allows us to speak and write about whatever we want. All truth is God's truth."

The band's advocacy is Blood: Water Mission, an organization it founded to raise funds for HIV/AIDS initiatives in Africa. It aims to encourage the band's student fan base in the US to help in the effort.

It's admirable that fame hasn't gone to their heads. They haven't lost their sense of humor nor their easy rapport with other people.

Despite the serious nature of most of the questions, the guys peppered their profound answers with comical one-liners.

When asked about their celebrity status, funnyman Mason joked, "It still feels weird. We still get up in the morning, put my pants on one leg at a time…"

Lowell jumped in, "We try not to use it as a compass by any stretch, but it's nice to be validated that way."

The secret to their success? "Dietary supplements," Mason quipped.

But on a serious note, Haseltine said the band keeps base with the faith and with one another. "I think it has to do with cooperating and leaning on each other, and sort of responding to each other that keeps it interesting [and] fresh."

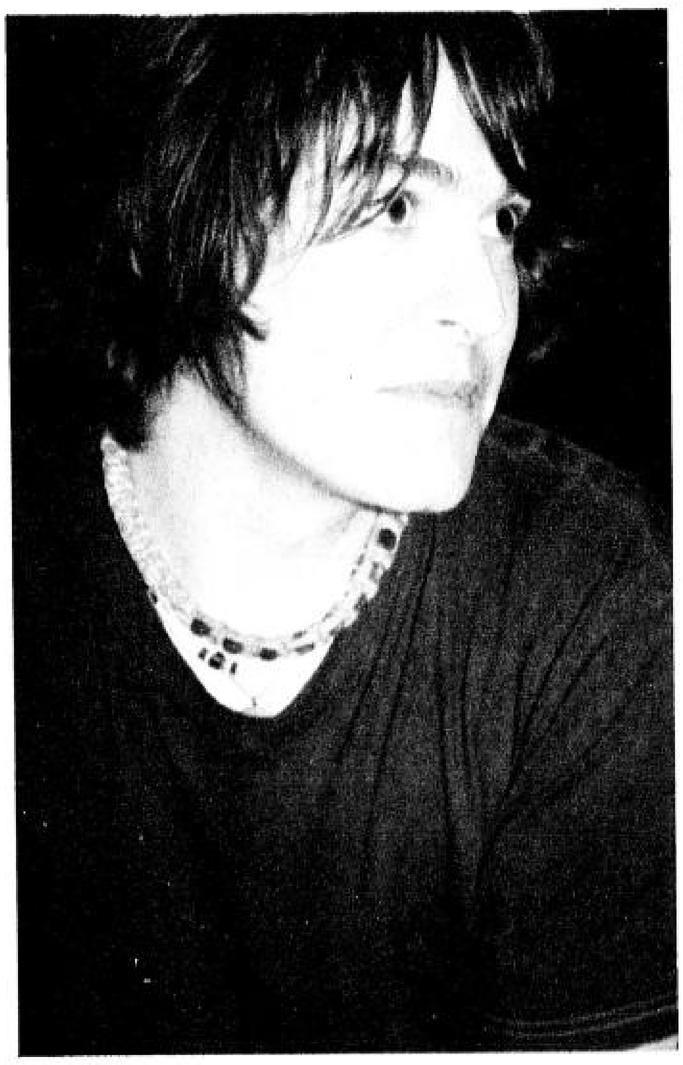
"It's good to be recognized. We love making music, [and] we put a lot into the process of trying to be better songwriters, so this is somewhat of the fruits of that labor," Haseltine said earnestly. "We're excited about it, and it's mostly humbling that people recognize what you do."

Jars' seventh endeavor, "Redemption Songs," is due for release on March 22, and fans are clamoring for a follow-up tour sometime soon. Until then, they will always remain the regular, down-to-earth guys who just wanted to do some serious karaoke. And eat lots of mangoes while they're at it.

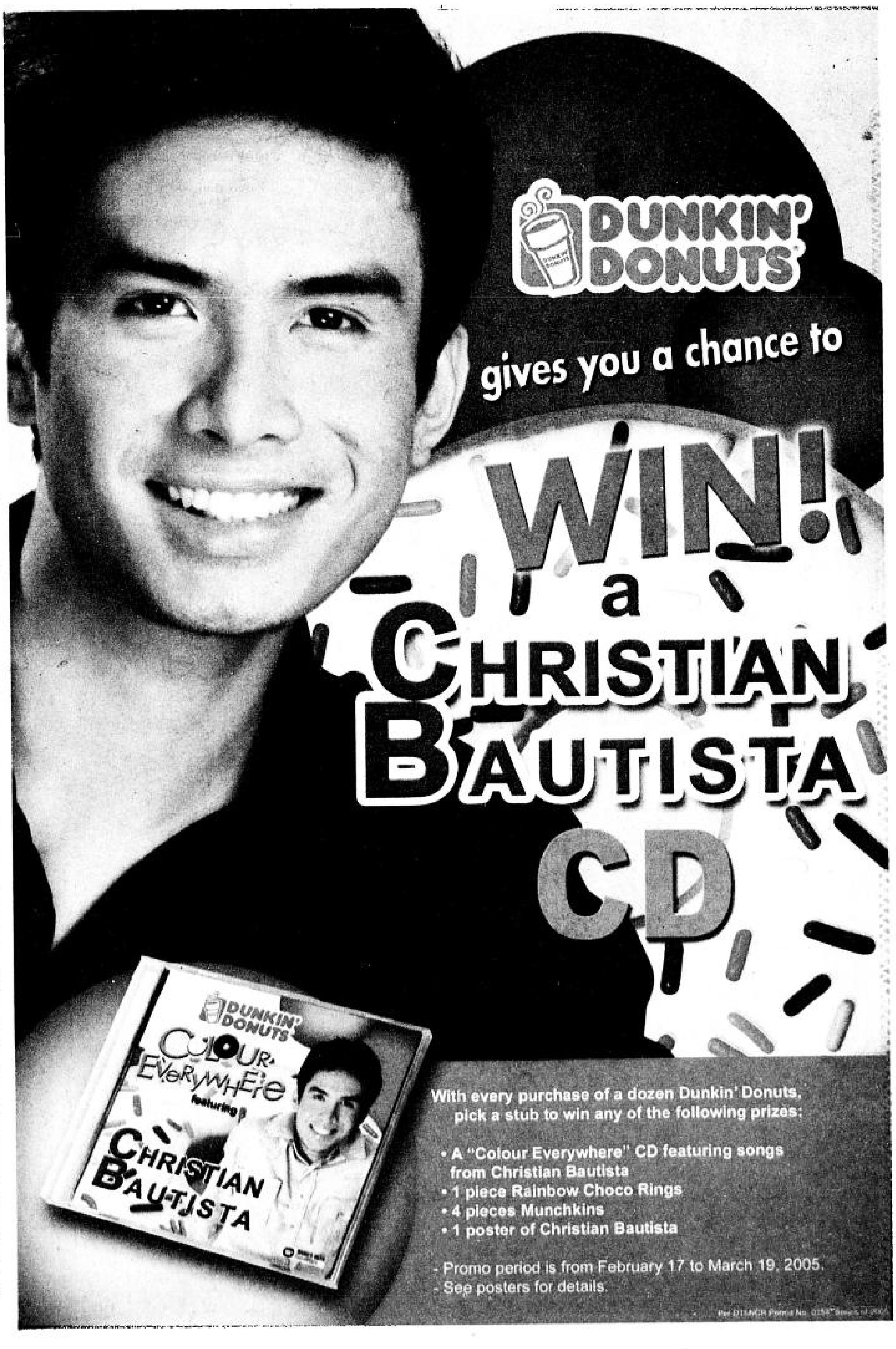
E-mail aoshi_no_miko@atenista.net.

The Christian-inspired rock band is overwhelmed by the success of its Philippine gig

GUITARIST Steve Mason



FRONTMAN Dan Haseltine



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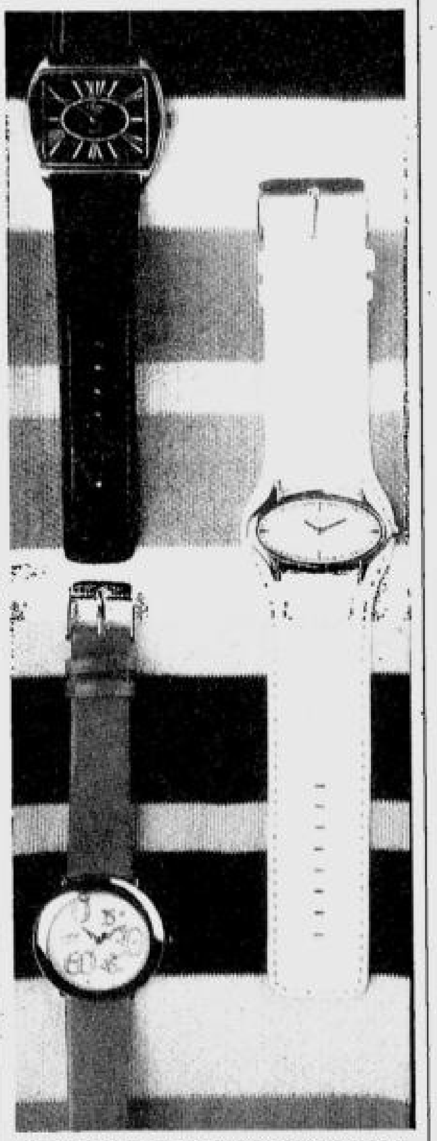
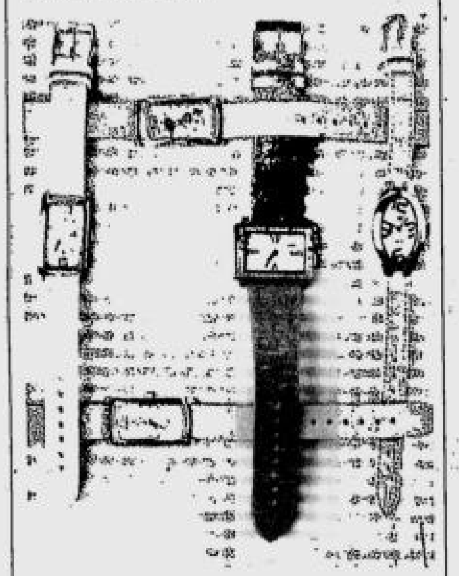


JOIE DE VIVRE ON YOUR WRIST
Cherie Paris watches' Spring/Summer 2005 collection features styles inspired by the joie de vivre of the streets of romantic Paris. This season's designs are trendy yet classic. They can be worn from morning to night, office to dinner date. Check out the watches at leading watch stores, SM and Robinsons Department Stores and through JC Martin.



Summer fun at Embassy

EXPERIENCE the bliss of summer today at Embassy Super Club, The Fort.

At 6:30 p.m., Rustan's and Culte Femme present its March-April 2005 collection that conjures thoughts of glazed bodies, sunset pool parties and summer fun with wild abandon. The Embassy comes alive with a flurry of flowing tops, dresses and wraps bursting with floral, ethnic and animal prints.

Created by Hindy Weber-Tantoco, the March-April 2005 collection can be purchased during the "one-day-only shopping spree" at Culte Femme Boutique located at Embassy Cafeteria, from 12 noon of the same day to 2 a.m.

Culte Femme stores are located at Rustan's Makati, Shangri-La Plaza, Robinson's Place Manila and Alabang Town Center.

Candy marks 6th year

CANDY celebrates its sixth anniversary this month. After tallying over 400,000 text and online votes, Candy announces the top picks in fashion, beauty, sports, music, movies, television and other fun favorites.

Laugh out loud as Candy gives you the 16-page Oops! Special booklet. If you're still cringing from your last blooper, take comfort in the fact that other cool Candy girls have had their share of mortifying moments—and lived to write about it.

Score free invitations for you and a friend to the party of the year—the sixth Candy Rap Awards on March 19, 7 p.m. at Expo Exchange, Greenbelt 1, Makati. Bring your Candy 2000 to 2005 anniversary issues and get the chance to be one of the six girls to win fabulous prizes! Meet other Candy girls by logging on to www.candymag.com.

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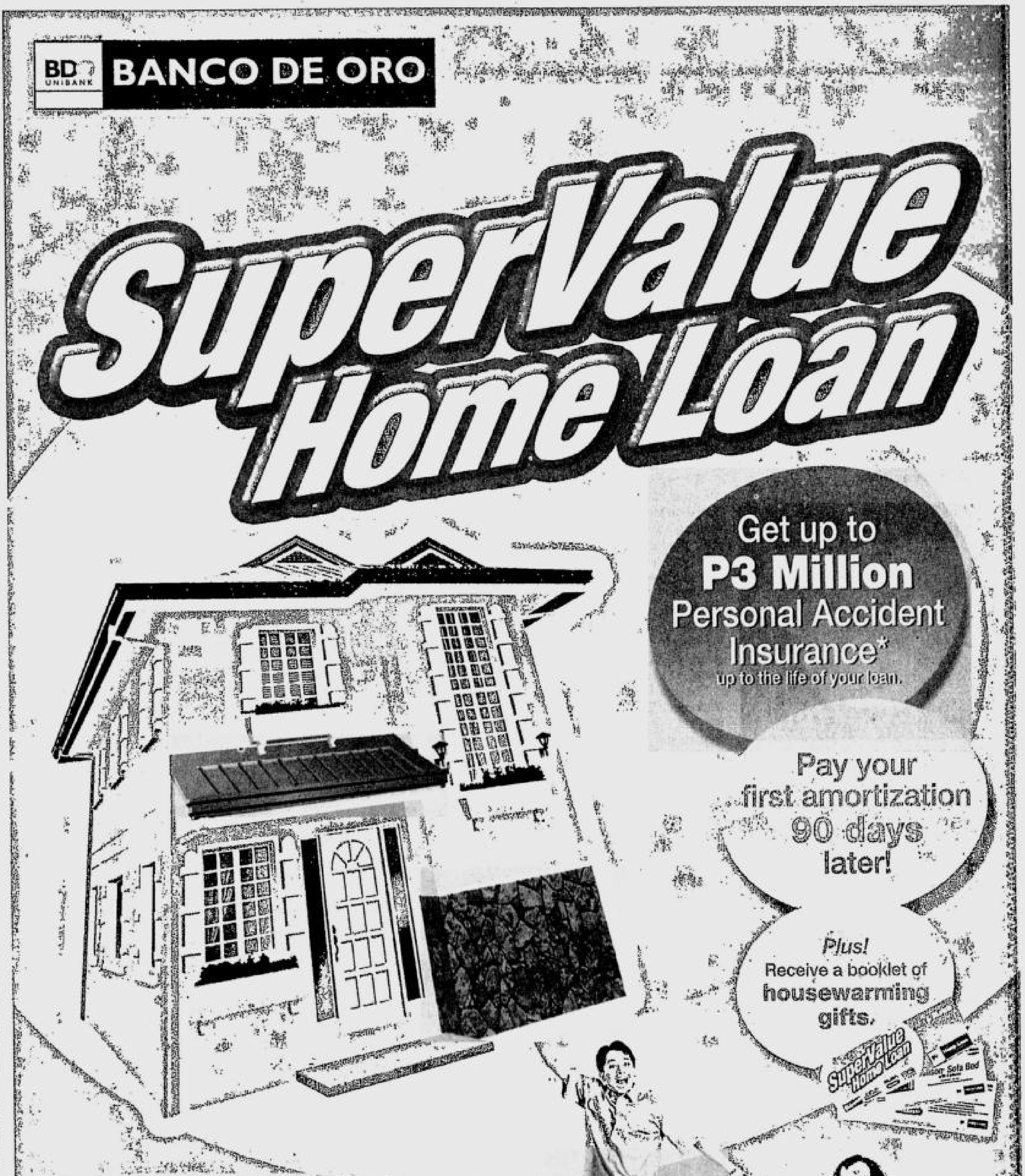
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Model house courtesy of Earth+Style Corporation

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0843 Series of 2005.

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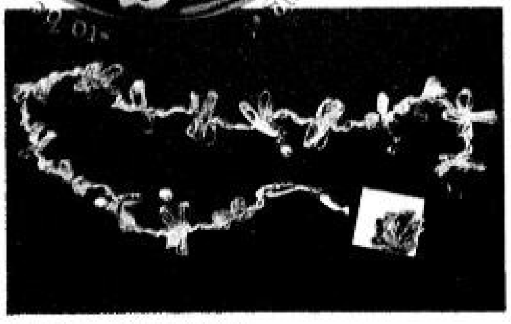
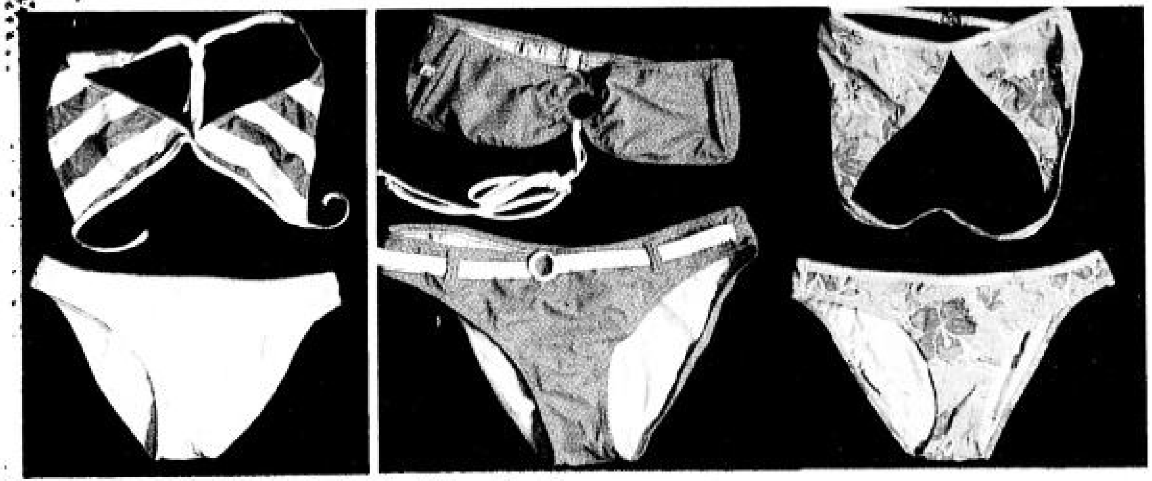
GIVE your outfit a dose of drama.


NOT your ordinary chain

TRINKETS galore

FLOWER power

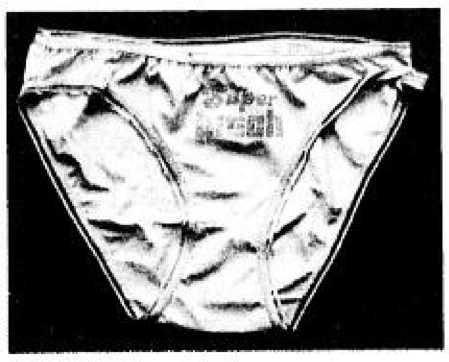

TWO-PIECE heaven. Assorted colors for different beaches

Lilay offers fashion items handmade from indigenous materials

SUMMER glam

Go local with Lilay!

By Kristine Ching
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Betoy Johnson


UNDIES with an attitude

SAY it with panties.

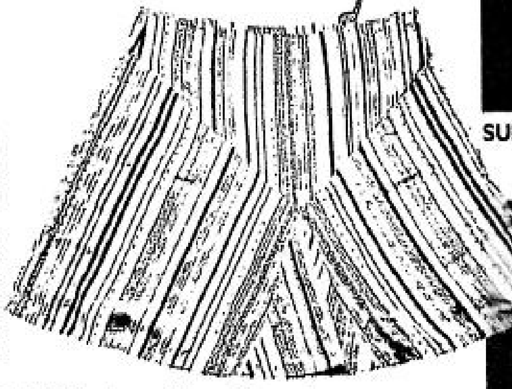
SURE, items from Bangkok, China and Korea are cheap and cute. But those stuff are all over it's not funny anymore.

That's why a group of young entrepreneurs headed by AJ Tagao decided to go against the bandwagon by sourcing their materials locally. As he explains, "We believe we do not have to look elsewhere to find good quality and stylish but affordable products."

The venture started when sisters AJ and Jen dreamed of having their own store. AJ concentrated on making bags, while Jen ventured into crafting accessories. They felt that showcasing their products in bazaars was a step closer to their goal, but felt that they needed a "consistent distribution channel."

When they were offered a space at 50th Avenue in Robinson's Galleria, they snapped up the opportunity and opened a store called Lilay. Wanting to share their blessings, they allowed other young entrepreneurs to consign their items.

"We will be able to help other budding entrepreneurs like us to share their talents as well. We are also looking for more young entrepreneurs who would like to consign their products with us," says AJ.


THIS bottom will go with any top.

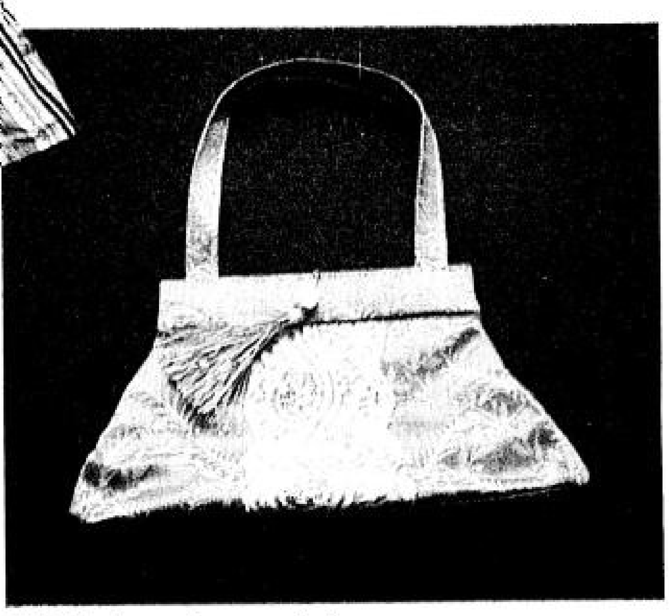
The items they offer are handmade in limited quantities and are exclusively available at Lilay.

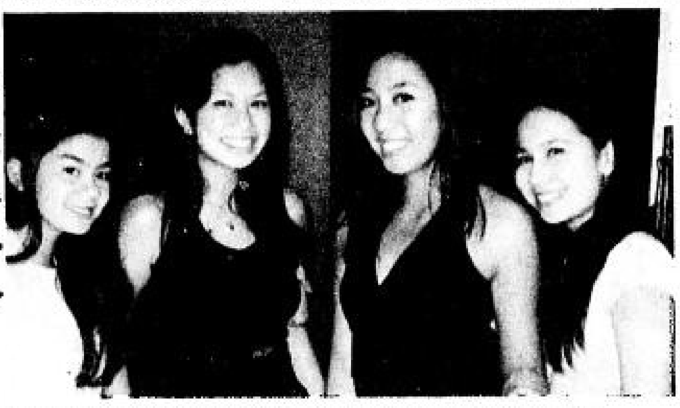
Prices are affordable at P150-650 for accessories, P450-700 for clothes (flirty tops, mini skirts, pants), P250-1,000 for bags (in various styles).

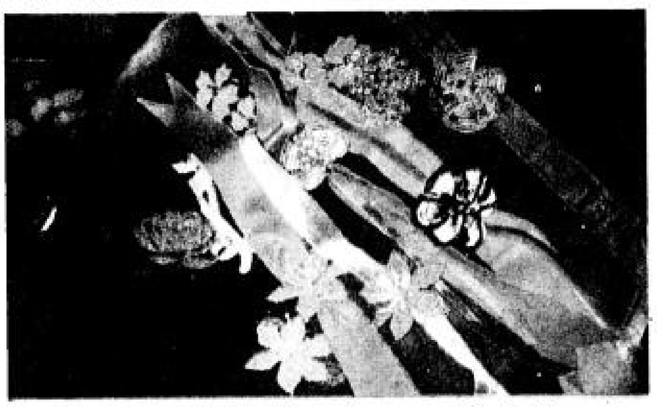
Lilay also carries consigned items, also equally inexpensive at P800-1,800 for a set of swimwear, P160-400 for flip-flops (plain and embellished), P100 for naughty underwear, P70-300 for Rina Albert paper products, and P250 for casual tees and layered racer-backs.

Lilay is at 50th Avenue, 3/F of Robinson's Galleria.

E-mail ajtagao@yahoo.com.


CLASSIC charm makes a comeback.


YOUNGfashionistas to watch out for: Thea Jacinto and friends


BEADED corsages to last you long after prom night, by Alessa Libongco

HOL'S fave prom outfit. Lucky girl who bought this silver sequinned tank top with taffeta bubble skirt won a surprise gift!

Beautiful house party

Text and photos by Tammy David
2bU! Correspondent

ONE thing I miss about prom season is the weeks of preparation before prom night. Having fittings, shopping for shoes and accessories, not to mention getting all glam and pampered in the parlor, were royalty treatment for me. I didn't need a tiara to feel like a queen. I was able to re-live my favorite prom memory last Feb. 5 when the House of Laurel held a tea party to launch its "Be Beautiful" collection.

It was not only a gathering for prom goers and Feb. 14 followers, but also for ladies like mothers and sisters who simply want to feel beautiful. Many flocked to the shop at Villena Street for an afternoon of makeovers, shopping and enjoying some delicious cakes.

The men and women of the House of Laurel headed by designer Rajo Laurel were there together with Lancôme makeup specialists Pazzy Navarro, Jasmine Mendiola and Gela Laurel.

Light, billowy jersey gowns and flattering wrap dresses in bright and vibrant shades were on display. There was also the standard "prom uniform" of a beaded corset with matching shawl.

The feminine frocks by Rajo Laurel would definitely win some prom awards. There were also charming pastel bubble and tulle cocktail skirts for the romantics who had Feb. 14 marked on their calendars.

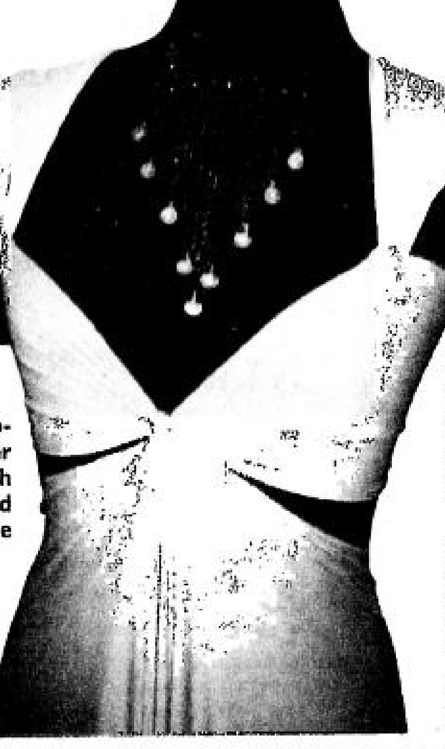
There were also bags by Bea Valdes and trinkets by Happy David that were far from your *lola*'s gold shell-shaped clutch bag. There was also the pearl siopao earrings to complete the ensemble. Lancôme added just the right amount of sparkle to complete the ambiance. It gave free make-overs and "Miracle so Magic" mini bottles to all shoppers.

Shopping, being made-over and mingling with friends while enjoying sinfully delicious cakes are indeed the best combination for a beautiful party. Everyone came out of the store rouged up, carrying the perfect outfit and feeling utterly beautiful.

House of Laurel is at 6013 Villena St. cor. Manalac, Poblacion, Makati. Call 8955688 or 8901686.

MAKEUP artist slash House of Laurel store manager Gela Laurel works her miracle on the guests with Lancôme Magic.

GODMOTHER of the house—Rajo Laurel


DELECTABLE two-tone lavender jersey dress with pink drops on gold chains cascade

BEAUTY fest. Leah Caringal and Joy Soriano

Franchise Excellence Awards 2004

Philippine Franchise Association
DEPARTMENT OF TRADE & INDUSTRY PHILIPPINES
PHILIPPINE RETAILERS ASSOCIATION

FEA 2004 WINNERS

Back row, Daniel Ongchoco (Informatics Holdings Philippines), Jude Ong (Fix Bench Salon), Sandee Masigan (Dimsum 'n Dumplings), Michael Aranilla (Figaro Coffee Company), Lyndon Angan (Islands Souvenirs Franchise Ventures Corp), José T. Pardo (PFA), Ted Ilano (Greenwich Pizza Corp), DTI Secretary Juan Santos, Bing Limjoco (PFA), Gonzalo Roque III (Kamiseta), Erickson Farillas (Plains & Prints). Second row, Antonio Apostol III (The Coffee Experience), Juliet Contreras (Fix Bench Salon), Juan Manuel Cura III (The Coffee Experience), Ricardo Andres (Candy Corner Philippines), Samie Lim (PFA), Lin Deres (Goldilocks), Gina Navarrete (Greenwich Pizza Corp) Anthony Huang (Marks and Spencer). Front row, Elaide Guzman (Pizza Hut), Carlito Decena Jr. (Hotshots), Carlo de Guzman (Hotshots), Ernesto Tanmantiong (Jollibee Foods Corp), Celestino Reyes (Reyes Haircutters), Roberto Gandionco (Julie's Franchise Corp), Robert Trota (Max's Franchising Inc), Jose Antonio Soler (Solerex Water Technologies Inc - Crystal Clear), Bienvenido Tantoco III (Starbucks)

Galíng Pinoy. Beyond Boundaries

With "Galing Pinoy. Beyond Boundaries" as theme, the Philippine franchise industry marked another milestone as major industry players and the business sector gathered and paid tribute to the country's outstanding franchise companies for the year 2004.

Spearheaded by the Philippine Franchise Association (PFA), in partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the annual Franchise Excellence Awards (FEA) is regarded as the most prestigious and the only award of distinction in the Philippine franchise industry. It is the first-ever seal of recognition for excellence given to the country's franchisors who have epitomized the model of a successful franchise both in terms of business growth and ethical practices. It is being supported by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) and the Philippine Retailers Association (PRA).

To date, 34 awards have already been given out by FEA since its inception in 1998. This year, 22 successful companies and individuals were added to the roster of winners. They were honored at a jubilant staging of the FEA 2004 Awards Night at the Rizal A and B Ballroom of the Makati Shangrila Hotel. Honorees are as follows:

Outstanding Filipino Franchise of the Year: Max's Franchising Inc. (Food-restaurant) Hall of Fame; Greenwich Pizza Corp (Food-Fastfood); Goldilocks (Food-Specialty); Figaro Coffee Company (Food-Bar Café); Candy Corner (kiosk); Solerex Water Technologies - Crystal Clear (Service) Hall of Fame; and, Kamiseta (Retail).

International Master Franchise of the Year: Pizza Hut (Food-Restaurant) Hall of Fame; Starbucks (Bar Café); and, Marks & Spencer (Retail) Hall of Fame.

Franchise Marketing Campaign of the Year: Island Souvenir (Retail); Reyes Haircutters (Service); and, Dimsum 'N Dumplings (Kiosk).

Most Promising Awardees include The Coffee Experience (Bar Café); Hotshots Flame-Grilled Burgers (Restaurant); Plains and Prints (Retail); and, Fix Bench Salon (Service).

For the first time, two franchisees were also given recognition for their outstanding contribution to the franchise system. - Daniel A. Ongchoco of Informatics Philippines and Ferdinand Hiranand of Jollibee.

Two special citations went to Tony Tan Caktiong of Jollibee (Award of Distinction - Global Franchise Excellence) for winning the Ernst and Young's World Entrepreneur of the Year, and to Julie's Franchise Corp, for leading the small investors' program contributing to the growth and development of micro businesses in the Philippines.

FEA 2004 is being sponsored by the Philippine Daily Inquirer, GMA-7, PLDT, Ayala Land Inc, and Robinsons Mall.

Franchise Excellence Awards 2004

A joint project of:
Philippine Franchise Association
Department of Trade and Industry
In cooperation with:
Philippine Retailers Association
Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Every year, the Philippine Franchise Association (PFA) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) honor franchises that consistently exhibit a high standard of growth and development in all aspects of franchise operations.

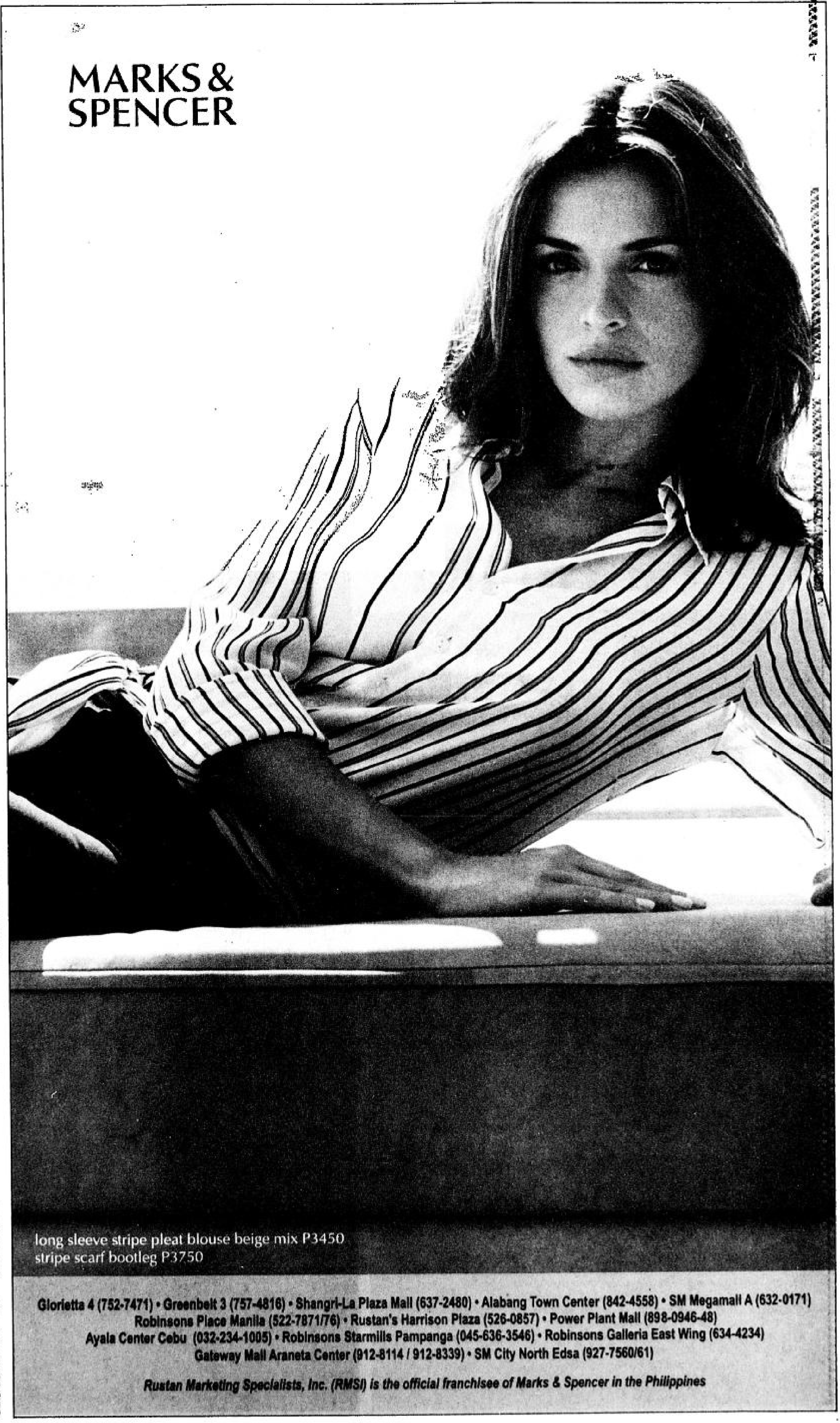
Launched in 1998 during the 6th Philippine International Franchise Conference and Expo, Franchise Excellence Awards (FEA) is the first-ever seal of recognition and excellence given to the country's franchisors who have epitomized the model of a successful franchise both in terms of business growth and ethical practices. This search provides a platform that showcase outstanding franchise operating in the Philippines. It also aims to encourage further development of franchise companies in both domestic and international markets and actualize the following PFA objectives:

1. To promote and sustain the growth of franchising as a tool for national development.
2. To empower and professionalize home-grown franchises and top performing master franchises to be able to meet world-class standards.
3. To actively promote Filipino franchises internationally.

FEA is the Philippines' most prestigious and the only official franchise award of distinction. The search is open to all franchises and is divided into three categories:

1. Outstanding Filipino Franchise of the

FRANCHISE/ G2


MARKS & SPENCER

long sleeve stripe pleat blouse beige mix P3450
stripe scarf bootleg P3750

Glorietta 4 (752-7471) • Greenbelt 3 (757-4816) • Shangri-La Plaza Mall (637-2480) • Alabang Town Center (842-4558) • SM Megamall A (632-0171)
Robinsons Place Manila (522-7871/76) • Rustan's Harrison Plaza (526-0857) • Power Plant Mall (898-0946-48)
Ayala Center Cebu (032-234-1005) • Robinsons Starmills Pampanga (045-636-3546) • Robinsons Galleria East Wing (634-4234)
Gateway Mall Araneta Center (912-8114 / 912-8339) • SM City North Edsa (927-7560/61)

Rustan Marketing Specialists, Inc. (RMSI) is the official franchisee of Marks & Spencer in the Philippines

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MAX'S FRANCHISING INC
PCCI Chairman Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr, PCCI Immediate Past President Noemi Saludo, PFA President Bing Limjoco, PFA Honorary Chairman, Jose T. Pardo, Max's Franchising, Inc. Chief Operating Officer Robert Ocampo and President Robert Trota, DTI Secretary Juan Santos, PFA Chairman Samie Lim.

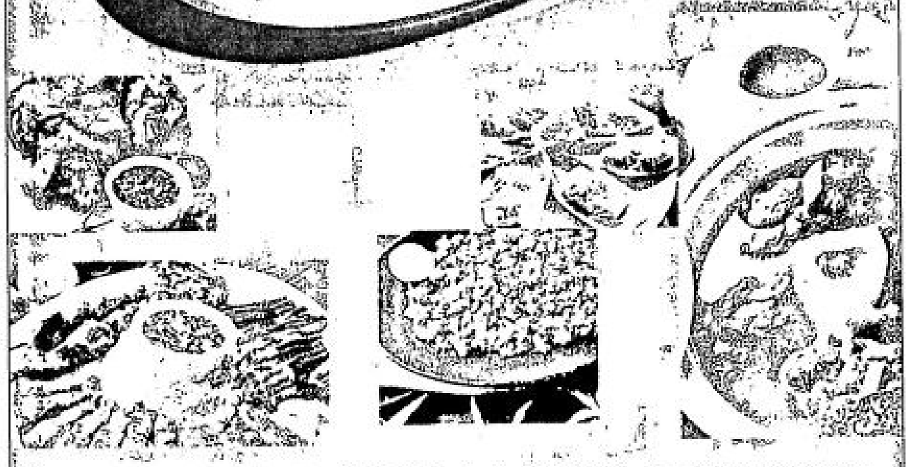
Franchise Excellence
Awards 2004

Hall of Fame

Franchise Excellence
Awards 2004

SOLEREX WATER TECHNOLOGIES INC (CRYSTAL CLEAR)
PFA President Bing Limjoco, PFA Honorary Chairman Jose T. Pardo, Solerex Water Technologies Inc (Crystal Clear) President Jose Antonio Soler and Chairman Dr. Ricardo Soler, DTI Secretary Juan Santos, PFA Chairman Samie Lim.

Dencio's



Outlets: Powerplant Mall, Rockwell 898-0601 • Jupiter 896-0320 • Paseo Center 840-4187 • Paseo de Magallanes 757-0614 • Araneta Center 421-4732 • Banawe 742-9955 • Capitol Hills 952-9356 • Scout Albano 411-2219 • Citywalk 1, Eastwood 911-7053 • Megastrip B, SM Megamall 637-4409 • Metrowalk 631-3545 • Annapolis, Greenhills 725-5015 • Brittany Bay, Sucat 839-2412• Star Mall, Las Pinas 873-9271 • Robinsons Ermita 525-1012 • Canlubang, Laguna (049) 549-2022 • Camp John Hay, Baguio (074) 446-0951 • Silang Crossing West, Tagaytay (046) 413-3788

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Awards 2004

MARKS & SPENCER
PFA President, Bing Limjoco, PFA Honorary Chairman Jose T. Pardo, Rustan's Marketing Specialists Executive Vice President Anthony Huang and General Manager Steven Sarmenta, DTI Secretary Juan Santos, PFA Chairman Samie Lim

Franchise Excellence
Awards 2004

PIZZA HUT
PFA President Bing Limjoco, Pizza Hut VP For Marketing Elaine Guzman, PFA Honorary Chairman Jose T. Pardo, Pizza Hut VP For Business Development Rose Herrera and VP For Operations Vip Nava, DTI Secretary Juan Santos, Pizza Hut Chief Operating Officer Lars Peterson, PFA Chairman Samie Lim.

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Franchise

From page G1

Year (Food, Retail, Service and Kiosk)

2. Most Promising Filipino Franchise of the Year (Food, Retail, Service and Kiosk)

3. International Master Franchise of the Year (Food, Retail, Service and Kiosk)

This year, two new categories have been added:

1. Franchise Marketing Campaign of the Year (Food, Retail, Service and Kiosk)

2. Franchisee of the Year (Food, Retail, Service and Kiosk)

Nominees are judged according to the following major Criteria:

Excellent Franchise Program

Excellent Sales and Marketing Program

Excellent Franchise Operating System

Excellent Financial Standing

Excellent Environmental Concern

Excellent Ethical Business practices and Reputation, and

Excellent Social and Civic Involvement

Invest in
a Winner.

He did.

Daniel Ongchoco
Franchisee of the Year -
Service Category
Franchise Excellence Awards 2004

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2000 Most Promising Filipino Franchise of the Year
2003 Outstanding Filipino Franchise of the Year
2004 Hall of Fame - Outstanding Filipino Franchise of the Year

CHICKEN.

2004
Franchise Excellence Award
MAX'S FRANCHISING, INC.
HALL OF FAME
dti

Sixty years of sarap to the bones.

Max's RESTAURANT
since 1945

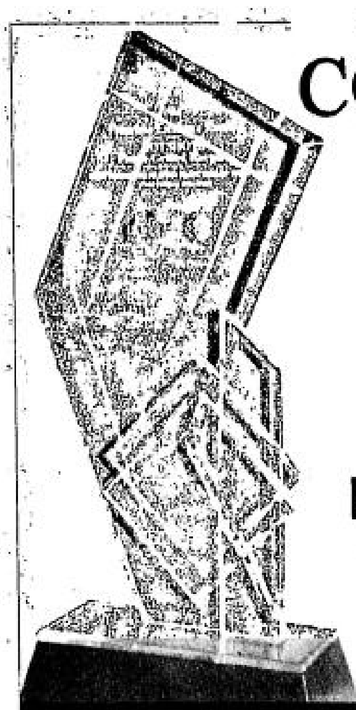
Most Promising

THE COFFEE EXPERIENCE
The Coffee Experience Franchise Manager Juan Manuel Cura III and Operations Manager Antonio Apostol III

HOTSHOTS FLAME-GRILLED BURGERS
Hotshots Flame-Grilled Burgers Owners Carlo De Guzman and Carlito Decena Jr

PLAINS & PRINTS
Plains & Prints VP And Creative Head Roxanne Ang-Farillas and President Erickson Farillas

FIX BENCH
Fix Bench Salon Assistant Manager For Legal & Business Development Juliet Contreras and Assistant General Manager Jude Ong



CONGRATULATIONS !
HOTSHOTS
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Filipino Franchise of the Year
(Food Category: Restaurant)
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Franchise Marketing

GREENWICH PIZZA CORP
Greenwich Pizza Corp Franchise Development Manager Ted Ilano and General Manager Gina Navarrete

DIMSUM N' DUMPLINGS
Dimsum 'n Dumplings Vice President Sandee Masigan

REYES HAIRCUTTERS
Reyes Haircutters Chief Finance Officer Dina Reyes, Franchise Director Jo Barbosa, and President Celestino Reyes

ISLANDS SOUVENIRS FRANCHISE VENTURES CORP
Islands Souvenirs Franchise Ventures Corp VP For Marketing Lyndon Angan

We're on a roll!
Most Outstanding
Filipino Franchise
of the Year
Food Category: Specialty
2004
Franchise Excellence Award

Goldilocks

Once again, Goldilocks has earned another prestigious award. This time the coveted 2004 Franchise Excellence Award.This honor is bestowed to Goldilocks for embodying the qualities of a successful franchise.

Ang award na ito ay nagpapatunay na kapag pinili ang Goldilocks, siguradong masarap at rewarding ang bawat araw ninyo.

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Outstanding Filipino Franchise of the Year

Franchise Excellence Awards 2004
Galing Pinoy, Beyond

GREENWICH PIZZA CORP
PFA President, Bing Limjoco, PCCI Chairman Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr. Greenwich Pizza Corp General Manager Gina Navarrete and Franchise Development Manager Ted Ilano, DTI Secretary Juan Santos, PFA Chairman Samie Lim.

Franchise Excellence Awards 2004
Galing Pinoy, Beyond

GOLDILOCKS
PFA President Bing Limjoco, PCCI Chairman Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr, Goldilocks Marketing Director Pinky Yee and Franchise Relations Manager Lin Deres, DTI Secretary Juan Santos, PFA Chairman Samie Lim.

Franchise Excellence Awards 2004
Galing Pinoy, Beyond

FIGARO COFFEE COMPANY
PFA President, Bing Limjoco, PCCI Chairman Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr, Figaro Coffee Company Franchise Services Manager Michael Aranilla, DTI Secretary Juan Santos, PFA Chairman Samie Lim.

Franchise Excellence Awards 20
Galing Pinoy, Beyond

CANDY CORNER PHILIPPINES
PFA President Bing Limjoco, PCCI Honorary Chairman and Chair For International Affairs lawyer Miguel Varela, DTI Secretary Juan Santos, Candy Corner Philippines President Ricardo Andres, PFA Chairman Samie Lim.

Franchise Excellence Awards 2004
Galing Pinoy, Beyond

KAMISETA
PFA President Bing Limjoco, PCCI Honorary Chairman and Chair For International Affairs lawyer Miguel Varela, Kamiseta President Gonzalo Roque III And Vice President Ma. Cristina Roque, DTI Secretary Juan Santos, PFA Chairman Samie Lim.

International Master Franchise

Franchise Excellence Awards 2004
Galing Pinoy, Beyond

RUSTAN COFFEE CORP (STARBUCKS)
PFA President Bing Limjoco, PCCI Honorary Chairman and Chair For International Affairs lawyer Miguel Varela, Rustan Coffee Corp (Starbucks) Bienvenido Tantoco III, DTI Secretary Juan Santos, PFA Chairman Samie Lim.

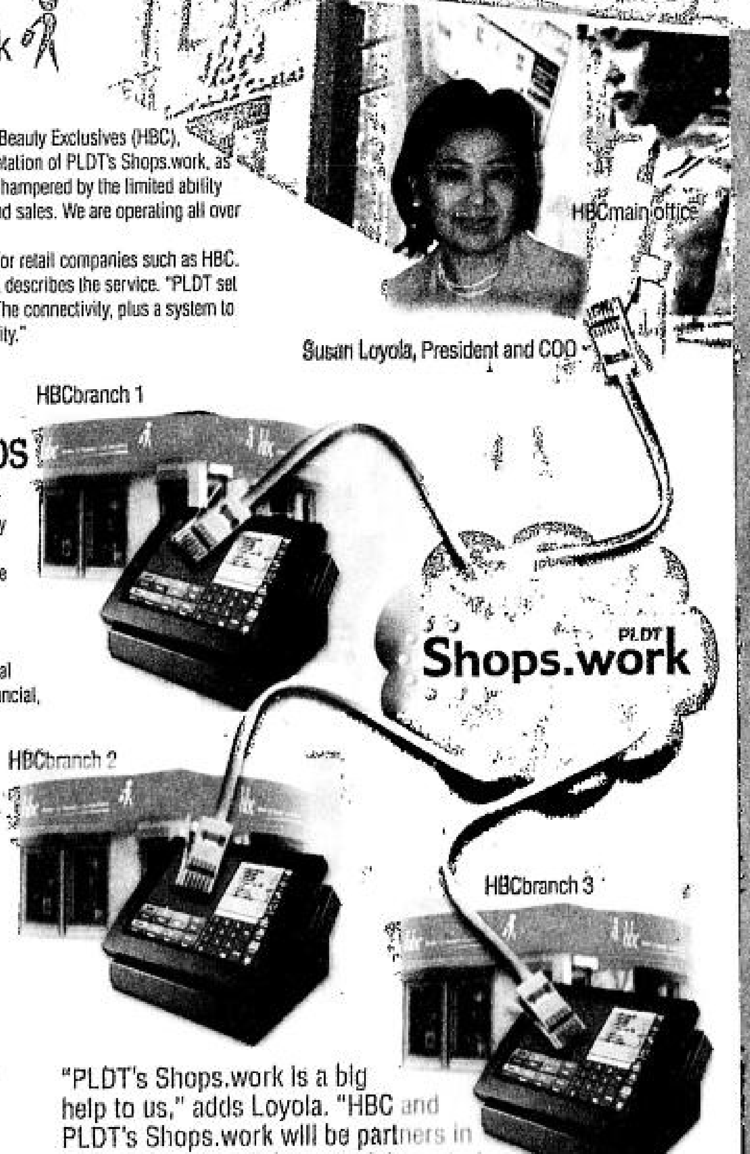
hbc home of beauty exclusives

Home of Beauty Exclusives exceptional growth with PLDT Shops.work

a PLDT case study on Shops.Work

Susan Loyola, President and Chief Operating Officer for Home of Beauty Exclusives (HBC), describes their growth situation, before their company's implementation of PLDT's Shops.work, as difficult. "Our aggressiveness in pursuing our goals was severely hampered by the limited ability of our branches to deliver timely information such as inventory and sales. We are operating all over the country need to have constant and reliable connectivity."

Shops.work offers connectivity services specifically tailored for retail companies such as HBC. PLDT's FVP for Corporate Business Solutions, Nerissa S. Ramos, describes the service. "PLDT set up the highway which retail stores can use to transfer their data. The connectivity, plus a system to run on it, makes an end-of-day, per branch, financial report a reality."



Susan Loyola, President and COO

reachingouttomorefilipinos

HBC provides beauty salon products and services tailor-made for Filipinos since 1993. The company headquartered at Quezon City has experienced phenomenal growth. Ms. Loyola attributes part of this to the Filipina's priority for beauty. HBC's future is therefore heavily reliant on technology.

"If there is technology available that can help us get our job done faster, we do not hesitate to acquire it," states Loyola. Branches now have real-time information delivered on a periodical basis throughout the day using Shops.work. Not only are the financial, logistics and inventory reports updated, but payroll as well.

swiftprecision

Mar Jovero, Technology Manager for HBC, recounts, "We used to have so many documents accompanying our inventory trucks, and both headquarters and the shop manager would have to spend hours checking items manually." He continues that the same held true for payroll, causing major handling problems.

"Now, headquarters' and the branch's databases are updated exactly when a shipment is received through the automated replenishment and delivery remote system. All of these end in a periodical report for the managers to check on-line," explains Mr. Jovero.

costeffectivesolution

The subject of cost is a constant concern with Ms. Loyola, preferring to describe the cost benefits of Shops.work in terms of overall value. "Shops.work instantly provided a 30% savings off long distance toll charges. With an approximate one-year return on investment," she explains. These are magic words for any businessman, but she goes on to emphasize that the true value of the service is unquantifiable. "The real importance is value to the company, overall."

"PLDT's Shops.work is a big help to us," adds Loyola. "HBC and PLDT's Shops.work will be partners in our pursuit of realizing our vision – to be the leading innovative world-class retailer of health, beauty and personal care products."

multitaskingsystem

Other key operations targeted to run on Shops.work include ERP systems such as HR applications, on-line ordering, auto replenishment, supply chain, a Solomon-based financial module and remote data service management system. Another application they are excited about is customer relationship management, which, unlike the others, is a marketing function with customer loyalty as its main goal, translating to revenue generation.

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PLDT Shops.work

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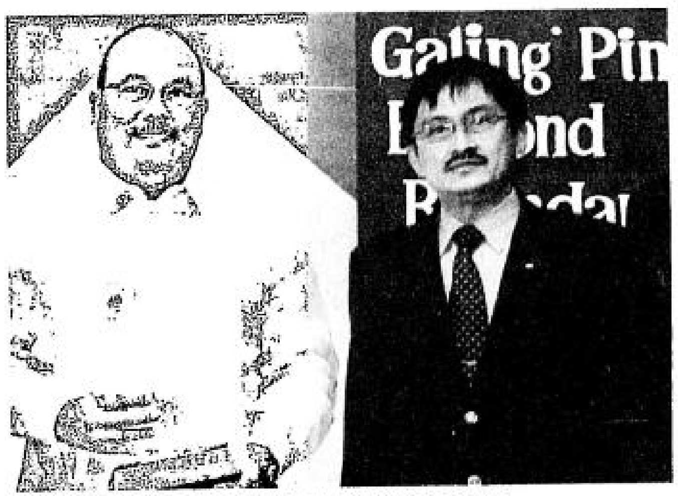
Tony Tan Caktiong, President, Jollibee Foods Corp.

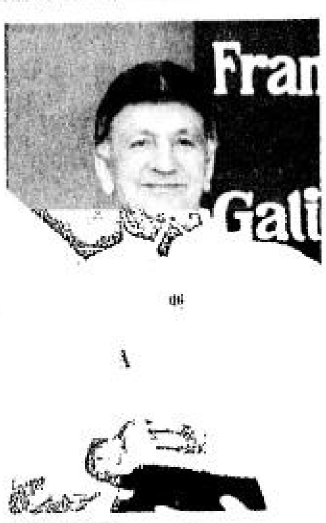


SPECIAL CITATION FOR A FRANCHISOR
Julie's Franchise Corp President And CEO Roberto Gandionco and Chief Operating Officer Virgilio Espeleta

Franchisee of the Year

Franchise Excellence Awards 200
Galing Pin

INFORMATICS
Daniel A. Ongchoco, President, GNQ Tech Resources Inc.



JOLLIBEE
Ferdinand Hiranand, President, Harry-Joy Food Center Inc.